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Vital distinctions, Mortal questions

DANIEL CALLAHAN

HUMANAE VITAE:
The Editors & Robert G. Hoyt
PANAMA: Linda Drucker
THE ARAB SUMMIT: Terence Wrong

BOOKS: Love in the Time of Cholera: ELIZABETH A. BEVERLY
Dangerous Dossiers/The Boss: SAUL MALOFF
Stealing Home: GERALD WEALES

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CORRESPONDENCE

Agreeing to disagree

Heidelberg, W. Germany

To the Editors: Because I receive *Commonweal* five to six weeks after publication, I am late in addressing the editors' reply [March 25] to letters about the editorial on deterrence, "Maintaining Perspective" [January 29].

When, in 1928, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was concluded, the ancient *Sis vis pacem, para bellum* was changed into *Sis vis pacem, para pacem.* I was very glad. But in view of Hitler's rearmament, I was convinced that France and Great Britain were obliged to rearm against him who strived absolutely for war and the domination of the whole world, and for the extermination of the Jews. That those powers did not rearm, is, it seems to me, their historical guilt.

Regarding nuclear war, however, I see quite a new situation. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Emmanuel Mounier wrote in his *Esprit* (January 1947): "*Maintenant l'humanité comme telle va devoir se choisir et il lui faudra, de toute évidence, un effort héroique pour ne pas choisir la facilité, le suicide. On peut dire que sa maturité commence à cette heure.*" We experience, as it were, the change from quantity into quality. Is it not true that deterrence supposes the readiness to put up with the horrible death of millions of innocent human beings? I cannot find a value that could justify such a slaughter, not even liberty in the Western meaning. Nuclear deterrence, therefore, I judge a sin that cries to heaven.

Especially for Christians, there is an obligation to afford confidence in anticipation. This is the meaning of the "Pax Christi." I am sorry to not quite agree with you.

ALFONS BEIL

Jackson's defense

Baton Rouge, La.

To the Editors: Peter B. Kovler's article ["Jackson's Candidacy: Tiptoeing Around the Questions," April 8] manages to damn Jackson with faint praise, and then suggest that lack of support by non-blacks is probably not racism, but rather "his ego, his past, or his foreign policy." I'm sure Jackson's ego is a stumbling block with many, primarily because he acts like he has as much of a right to be elected president as the other candidates. A wise man once said, "Racism is like alcoholism; until a man is willing to admit to his sickness, he can't be cured.

Mr. Kovler complains because Operation PUSH received $200,000 from the Arab League. I suspect if this donation had been from B'nai B'rith there would be no complaint, unless Jackson failed to mention the source of the funds. His past and current ties with Fidel Castro, Yasir Arafat, Lewis Farrakhan, and Bert Lance also evoke complaint. Precisely why a civil relationship with the premier of Cuba, and with the man every government (except Israel and the U.S.) in the world recognizes as the representative of the Palestinian people, should necessitate inquiry escapes me. I would hope the inquiry would also include and compare our present president's supportive relations with Mr. Botha and Mr. Shamir. As for Mr. Farrakhan and Bert Lance, let's also inquire into Ronald Reagan's acceptance of support from Jimmy Swaggart and Lyn Nofziger just for analogy.

The remarks on "control of wealth, broadcasting stations, and other centers of power," and "Israel is subsidized by America . . . it (Israel) subsidizes South Africa," do raise questions that should not be tiptoed around. I, for one, would appreciate it if either Mr. Kovler and/or *Commonweal* would jump in and enlighten us as to how Mr. Jackson has his facts wrong. Cutting military spending 30 percent and closer ties with Cuba? No tiptoeing around here. I say "Right On!", and I'm not even a political science professor.

RAY E. INGRAM

Which way Chile?

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Virginia Bouvier's review of Jacobo Timerman's *Chile: Death in the South* [April 22] piqued my interest. I share many of her disquietudes about the book even as I affirm its power to communicate Chile's *angst* at not overcoming the Pinochet nightmare.

I differ with Bouvier and agree with Timerman that Chileans in recalling the past must go beyond nostalgia and search their history for the lineage of the current demon. Pinochet was not spawned through spontaneous generation; he and his supporters are somehow as Chilean as Neruda—a painful statement to write; thrice painful to integrate.

Among the reasons Bouvier and other Chileanists and Chileans will have difficulty with the book is the author himself. First, that an Argentine would dare prescribe for Chileans how to return to democracy! Only the shared horrors of human rights tragedies in their neighboring countries have moved Chileans and Argentines to talk to one another. Second, while Timerman himself eventually suffered at the hands of the Argentine military, he is no unsullied saint of democracy, but was among those who initially supported Videla. Third, Timerman's worldview and imagery draw largely from the experiences of World

(Continued on page 414)

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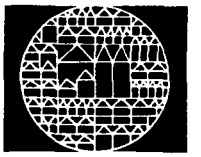

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Anniversary waltz

Paul VI issued *Humanae vitae* twenty years ago: on July 25, 1968. The anniversary is being celebrated, in some quarters, as the great dividing line between those who are faithful to the church, and those who are not. The point is well taken, but, in this case, misapplied. Faithfulness to the church—to the Gospel proclaimed and witnessed by Jesus' disciples, and guided and enlivened by the Spirit—is essential. But faithfulness is not blind assent to assertions of authority.

Who was more faithful a century ago? Those who insisted upon the "doctrine" that the temporal power of the pope and his sovereignty over the papal states was required to assure his independence—or those who questioned it? "Temporal power" was a teaching repeated no less incessantly and vehemently— but with a good deal more bloodletting—than the ban on artificial contraception today. It, too, was invested with papal authority and became a standard of loyalty for advancement to important positions of church leadership. And it was wrong.

Twenty years ago, determination to be faithful to the church led many Catholics to conclude, and to say, that *Humanae vitae* was one of those tragic errors into which the church of Christ has fallen over the centuries, sometimes with the best of intentions but always with long-run damage to its mission.

A careful rereading of the encyclical, twenty years later, suggests that Paul VI, in speaking with a pastoral voice and with close attention to consequentialist arguments, may have foreseen the furor that was to come and tried to ease it; hard sayings are couched in temperate language.

Despite this, the pope's words do not add up to a compelling, or even persuasive, argument. Indeed, in a letter that extolled the values of married love, recognized the need for responsible parenthood, and accepted "recourse to infertile periods" (the rhythm method) as lawful, we find that the prohibition against artificial contraception, especially the pill, seems more arbitrary and ungrounded today than it did in 1968. Furthermore, for all of the pope's insistence on natural law and the constant teaching of the church, he seems more concerned, at points, with what he saw as the dire consequences of contraception—marital infidelity, a lowering of moral standards, and the lack of incentive for the young to observe the moral law (read: fear of pregnancy).

Paul VI was right to worry, and the terrible human costs of our culture's disarray in sexual matters is "Exhibit A" of those who currently defend the encyclical. They might be reminded of the logical fallacy of *post hoc, ergo, propter hoc*, but their argument is more fundamentally flawed, since the so-called sexual revolution was well under way when *Humanae vitae* appeared.

For all of his justifiable concern, Paul VI's conclusions hobbled the church for the cultural struggle at hand. Responsible human sexuality means drawing lines; the

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sorry outcome, as we now see, was that he drew one of them in the wrong place. Rather than enhancing the church's teaching on sexuality, the encyclical unwittingly undermined it.

The time had come to listen to mature Christians and to formulate a teaching about the truly sacramental nature of marriage and sexual intimacy, including the radical notion that sexual intercourse within marriage is a good in itself, a source of delight and comfort not only to men, but to women as well. Part and parcel of that good is the ability of married couples, and especially of women, to control the number of children they have and the spacing of births. (The continuing and unhappy consequences of Paul's decision are painfully apparent in John Paul II's recent encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, in which there is, and can be, no serious attention to unchecked population growth as one tragic factor in underdevelopment.)

In 1968, many bishops and theologians understood that the church's teaching had to change, that the press of the demographic revolution in both the developed and developing countries and the availability of the pill represented a turning point in the world and the church. The pope wouldn't turn. But most married couples did, some with the support of their pastors and bishops, and some without; some with a serenity that grew from careful and conscientious thought and reflection; some with bitter and angry hearts. Other couples, far smaller in number, adopted the so-called rhythm method, some from a sense of asceticism, some in obedience to what they saw as a binding teaching. But none of these conscientious decisions resolved the dilemma in which the whole church now finds itself.

Clergy, religious, and lay teachers, caught between bishops obedient to the pope and an incredulous laity, became circumspect or fell silent on the subject of sexual morality in pulpits and classrooms. The failure to develop a fuller understanding of marriage and sexual morality has been especially detrimental to young Catholics. Where previous generations of Catholics agonized over questions of conscience, sex, contraception, and child-bearing, many younger Catholics, along with their non-Catholic peers, following the culture's lead have adopted a contraceptive mentality and the casual sexual relations that go with it.

Some Catholics, finding the ban on artificial contraception outlandish, proceeded to question the church's whole teaching on sexual and reproductive morality. Perhaps this is clearest in the abortion debate, where so many have succumbed to the notion that abortion is a subset of the contraception debate and judge the church's teaching equally vulnerable. In the face of more recent developments, particularly surrogate motherhood and in vitro fertilization, a perplexed world is genuinely searching for moral yardsticks, and yet the church's loss of credibility once again injures its efforts to speak a sane word to a potentially receptive public.

In 1968 *Commonweal*'s editors predicted that the encyclical "will fail the test of history." Two decades do not make history, but so far it seems that the encyclical has failed the church.

ET CETERA

MEETING THE RESCUERS The poet e.e. cummings once told an audience that despite half a century's search, he had not located "a single peripherally situated ego." He went on to offer a comprehensive list of those who "are far from unselfcentered," and concluded that "altruists (above all)" lead the inventory.

Too bad e.e.c. did not know of the work of Samuel and Pearl Oliner, whose meticulous social study of those who rescued Jews in Nazi Europe has just been published under the uncummings-like title, *The Altruistic Personality* (The Free Press, $24.95). The poet might have been able to help them with the title; but more important, the Oliners would have been able to introduce him to some of the 406 rescuers they and their study team interviewed.

Altruists are not easy to find, particularly in the Oliners' sense of those whose activity is not only directed at helping others, but is voluntary, accompanied by no external reward, and (in the setting of Nazi Europe) involved high risk. The Oliners note this significant, overarching characteristic of rescuers: their sense of personal responsibility for diverse groups of people ("extensivity" as contrasted to the "constrictedness" of nonrescuers), and their willingness not only to feel for but act in behalf of people outside their own group. Even the most generous numerical estimate of those who intervened during the Nazi occupation is meager, less than one-half of 1 percent of the total population involved. On the other hand, as the foreword to this remarkable study notes—quoting Camus—we have to keep faithful "a double memory . . . a memory of the best and of the worst."

There are too few systematic studies of the best, of goodness in general. The Oliners' study helps to fill a void. But that void will continue to run as deep and as near as our own hearts. In introducing the book last month, Mrs. Oliner told a press conference that she didn't know what she would have done in a similar situation. From listening to her and to her husband that day, there is little doubt what they would have done. The value of their study is to tell us not only why, but how others might yet arrive there as well. It is also an example of how scientific inquiry can become a treasured part of the moral enterprise.

RISKY BUSINESS Insurance companies and casinos are alike in that both are organized gambling ventures formed to turn a profit. Actuaries stand behind insurance company "gamblers," nudging them to place their chips on one square or another as the wheel spins or the dice roll. With their calculations and projections about how many persons of this or that age will have which kind of accident, disease, or death, actuaries help to determine premiums, payments, and reserves. Their predictions—along with invested funds—are what keep insurance companies in (or out) of the game.

AIDS—with its sudden onset, rapid spread, long latency

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period, near 100 percent death rate, and lack of a vaccine or cure—is an actuary's nightmare. The $290 million in AIDS-related claims during 1986 is just the beginning. Projections show that by the year 2000, there could be hundreds of billions of dollars in payouts on insurance, accounting for 20 percent of all life claims. Insurers turn to their actuaries. Actuaries are turning to each other.

In April 1987, the Society of Actuaries of the U.S. formed a task force to study the impact of AIDS on the solvency of insurance companies. It produced a report offering guidelines and corporate strategies. Then, in May 1988, the Society held a conference in Chicago to discuss AIDS as it relates to health care, insurance, and legislation.

Some insurers—in addition to funding AIDS research and joining in the national education effort about AIDS—are trying a variety of approaches to underwriting, such as selling full-health coverage without AIDS testing—on condition that the insured is symptom-free for one full year after the policy is purchased.

The nation as a whole has a stake in the solvency of insurers, a stake which must be carefully balanced with the issues of AIDS testing and confidentiality. If, for example, the growing number of local restrictions on testing skews the predictions of actuaries, companies may raise premiums significantly beyond some persons' ability to pay. Or companies may close their operations in high-risk areas. Then the cost of AIDS will have to be met solely by government and philanthropy, already supporting large numbers of the uninsured.

So far, however, these worst-case scenarios are not upon us. Actuaries are arming themselves with information to improve accuracy in their forecasts.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION Last February 6, forty-five Princeton students suffered alcohol-induced medical problems as a result of drinking large quantities of alcohol at an eating club sign-in. All required medical attention. At Rutgers University, a student recently died under similar circumstances. The president and the social chairman of the Princeton club where the incident took place have been found guilty of serving liquor to minors, fined $500, and sentenced to thirty days in jail. In explaining the unprecedented jail sentence, the judge refused to treat the incident "as an undergraduate frolic that got out of hand." To Harold T. Shapiro, president of Princeton, the sentences were "disproportionate and excessive." Perhaps extenuating circumstances were not mentioned in the news story (*New York Times*, May 26, 1988), but in the face of many such incidents and the university's failure, so far, to take disciplinary action against any students, the judge is right to signal the high cost of frolicsome drinking.

THERE AT THE NEW YORKER There is a touching, illuminating, and absorbing profile of a "Parish Priest," the Reverend Joseph Greer, in the *New Yorker* (June 13, 1988), worth reading and pondering, even beyond the magazine's usual readers in Dubuque and New York. The profile was written by Paul Wilkes who has written for *Commonweal*.

REMEMBERING 'HUMANAE VITAE'

SEX: HOW ODD OF GOD

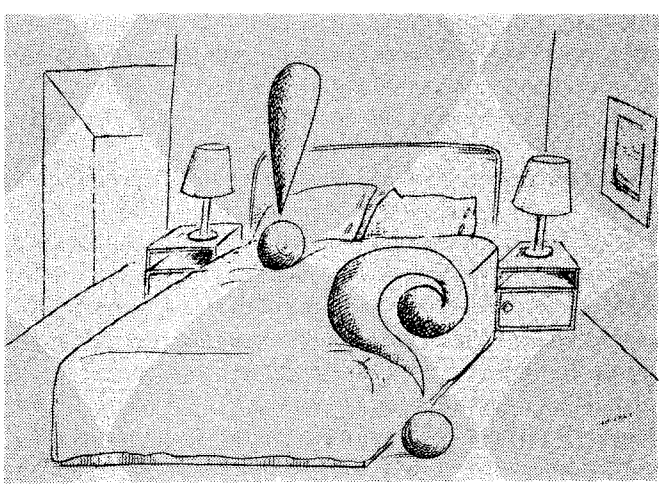
THE APPARATUS & THE ETHIC

Sexual intercourse, Dorothy Day once wrote, has something funny about it: funny-odd, funny-laughable. She compared the mechanics of human coupling with the act of eating, which on analysis into its parts also looks odd: You push your fork into a substance, insert it into your mouth, gnash it about, swallow. It's bizarre.

Day was using what a friend of mine calls "moon vision," looking at copulation and ingestion from afar, as it were, and as though for the first time, seeing their strangeness. I don't remember the context of her reflection, or where it led her. It may have been only an observation in passing. But it was common-sensical, in a Chestertonian way.

It was also deromanticizing, in a distinctly non-Chestertonian fashion. Romance is a component of sexuality for most of us; it's useful to be reminded that there's no necessary connection, that romance is something we add to the bare facts. Sexuality—defined as what we think, feel, and do about sex—is a social construct. We *discover* sex, one by one (or two by two). We *invent* sexuality, not all by ourselves but culturally. And we keep re-inventing it down through the centuries. Change may be for the worse, devolution; or for the better, development; but it happens.

All this applies to sexual ethics as it does to other aspects of sexuality. Gender discrimination in, say, the job market is obviously unfair to women and hurtful to society. Less obviously, sexist attitudes played out in the bedroom demean at least one partner and rob the sex act of human significance for both. Thus the feminist drive for equality is a moral movement in more ways than one. For an example of devolu-



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tion: The movement toward what is called sexual liberation can lead in several directions, one of them a depersonalized sexuality that represents a net loss, and a severe one, for individuals and society.

These thoughts are occasioned by the confluence of two events, the twentieth anniversary this month of the issuance of *Humanae vitae* and the recent publication by a committee of the American bishops of a draft pastoral on "women's concerns." *Humanae vitae* was a regressive moment in Catholic history and the history of human sexuality. Out of reflections on the "intimate structure" of the sex act, the encyclical says, we must conclude that having sex during the infertile period leaves the act "open to the transmission of life," and is therefore okay, whereas sex with a condom separates love-making from babymaking and is not okay. Paul VI then added that "the men of our day are particularly capable of seizing the deeply reasonable and human character of this fundamental principle."

The words are solemn but the argument is not serious. In the event, most men and women of our day have tended to regard the pope's conclusion as a nonprinciple, fundamentally unreasonable and non- or even anti-human. With all respect to Dorothy Day, who would never have accepted use of her "moon vision" in opposition to a papal prouncement, there's just not that much truth to be derived from contemplating the intimate structure of the sex act. The same grave attention given to the mechanics of eating would lead to a ban on No-Cal soda, which may give pleasure and satisfy an urge but frustrates the nutritive purpose built into our ingestive equipment.

In contrast, the draft pastoral "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption" is certainly not a regressive document, whatever its flaws. It's at least a half-step forward. A timorous one? Yes, and no. The draft names sexism as sin. It is supportive of women who "want to uproot the basic causes of injustice in the anthropology, the psychology, the thought patterns and the presuppositions of our culture"; their cry for justice is "a clear mandate for the church," which (the draft acknowledges) has been a partner in oppression.

So far, so very good. But the test comes in application. Does the church's exclusion of women from ordination flow out of inherited, erroneous, patriarchal presuppositions? What is notable here is that this draft of the letter does not *clearly* say either Yes or No. That's not radically courageous, but given the institutional context—the views of the present pope, the latest curial declaration on the topic—neither is it exactly timorous.

What of contraception and *Humanae vitae*? The draft pays at least as much attention to "voices of alienation" taking issue with the encyclical as to "voices of affirmation" singing its praises. After quoting a key paragraph of the encyclical (# 13) to convey the "official teaching of the church on artificial contraception," the letter says this teaching must be propagated. But the text itself doesn't do much propagating, or defending, or explaining. It not only asks "compassion" for people who in good conscience act contrary to the encyclical's proscription, it suggests a need for continued dialogue between people who defend the rhythm method and those who are not persuaded by the church's stand. (By way of contrast: In a footnote addressed to male Catholics, the bishops show understanding of how some or most of us, and some or most of them, got hooked on sexism; but they don't propose a dialogue beween sexists and their victims.) The draft says nothing at all about "enforcing" the encyclical, either in the confessional or by disciplinary action toward dissenters. When the drafters speak in their own name ("Responding as Bishops"), they practice a sort of minimalism: "The mutual love of Catholic couples should be open to new life." That refreshingly sensible remark is footnoted with a reference to *Humanae vitae*, so it's no daring departure. Still, one senses a lack of any real enthusiasm for teaching this particular chapter of the book.

It's too bad that one must apply the techniques of Kremlinology to find the inner meaning of hierarchical pronouncements of this kind, but that's the way it is. All institutions are conservative, and usefully so. Catholic moralists and hierarchs have a special problem, not limited to but more obvious in the sexual arena; they are bound by codes formulated in times when the very biology of sex, not to speak of its psychological dimensions and spiritual potential, was unknown or wrongly understood. The problem, of course, is infallibility (along with its cousin, the noninfallible but authentic magisterium). Because of that problem, it took John Courtney Murray much of a lifetime to figure out how to repudiate earlier teaching on religious liberty without seeming to do so.

It is a truism that codes of morality, including sexual morality, do change, and sometimes should. The draft pastoral letter exemplifies that; with regard to sexism it says that by passive default and active example the church has been teaching falsehood and practicing injustice, along with practically all other social institutions, for centuries. Even the encyclical accepts change: Decades ago, when I first wrote for Catholic publications, I was forbidden to mention the rhythm method in print because its moral status wasn't yet all that clear. It could be discussed only in the confessional, and then only if the penitent asked the right question. With *Gaudium et spes*, echoed by *Humanae vitae*, making love when sperm and ovum cannot meet became "noble and worthy."

There are Catholics who will celebrate the anniversary of *Humanae vitae* as a reaffirmation of the church's unique grasp of moral truth and of its claim to divine guidance. There are ex-Catholics who departed the fold for precisely opposite reasons. Among Catholics who hang in not because of but despite the encyclical, some regard it as a wound that's healed, or as a piece of esoterica that is best kept on a shelf in the closet, or as a useful example, leading to religious maturation, of the limits of the reach of authority. And some think of it as an intellectual scandal in itself and a sign of deeper problems that must be confronted some day, though the day be ever so distant. These subgroups of hangers-in aren't all that distinct; on a given day, I can agree with any or all of them.

ROBERT G. HOYT

Robert G. Hoyt, founding editor of the National Catholic Reporter, *is a writer, editor, and consultant.*

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REPORT FROM PANAMA

WASHINGTON CRIES UNCLE

NORIEGA'S MANY MANIPULATIONS

Panama City. More than three months after the U.S. adopted tough economic sanctions against the Panamanian regime, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega continues to cling to power. Noriega is hardly a popular dictator. "If there were such a thing as an unbiased poll in Panama, the (Noriega) government would have trouble getting 25 percent," says one foreign diplomat stationed in this steamy tropical capital. Yet despite his apparent unpopularity, Noriega has managed to survive a series of mass demonstrations against his regime, an indictment on drug trafficking charges by a Florida grand jury, a two-week general strike, and harsh economic sanctions that have caused a deep recession in the Panamanian economy. He has done so by employing a mixture of selective repression and clever manipulation of anti-American sentiment.

Noriega contends that the U.S., in trying to oust him, wants to install a more pro-American regime in order to avoid relinquishing control of the Panama Canal in the year 2000. The contracts that permit the U.S. military to maintain key bases in Panama, including the headquarters of the Southern Command, are also up for renegotiation in the year 2000. The Panamanian opposition dismisses Noriega's allegations as "pure demagoguery." Nevertheless, the Canal Treaties are considered the cornerstone of Panama's nationalistic "revolution," which began when Gen. Omar Torrijos came to power in a 1968 military coup. Any inference that the U.S. will not honor the treaties has enormous political resonance.

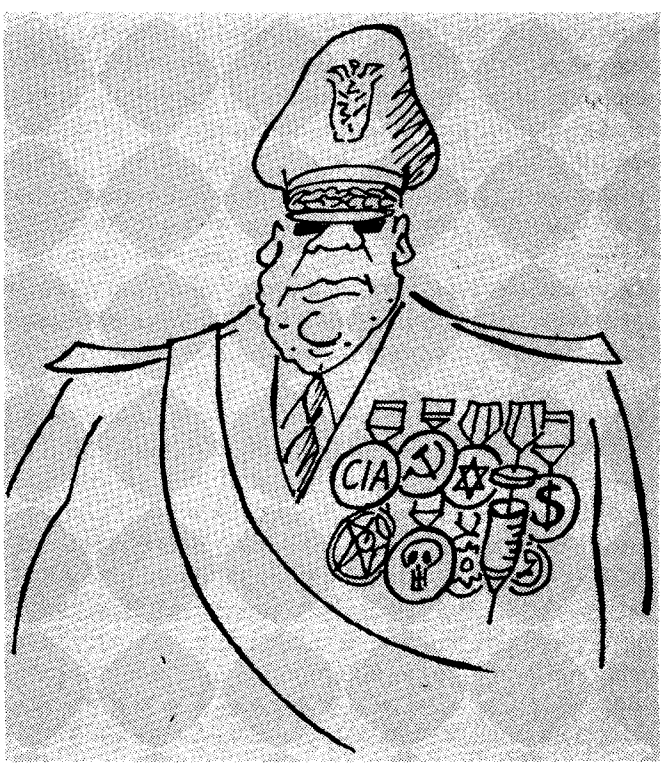
American officials expected the U.S. economic sanctions announced in March 1988 to quickly topple the Noriega regime. (Recall Assistant Secretary of State Elliot Abrams's now infamous pronouncement that Noriega would be leaving Panama within a matter of days.) The sanctions have caused a deep recession. The U.S. Embassy projects that Panama's Gross National Product will drop 10 percent to 15 percent in 1988, while a classified Panamanian government document predicts the decline will be as high as 20 percent. Several major U.S. banks have shut down their Panamanian operations, while others have announced that they will move their operations elsewhere.

The Noriega government has been forced to embark on a program of massive layoffs in the public sector, but has been met with strong political opposition from the unions that had been the backbone of the regime's support. Government workers continue to have difficulty cashing their paychecks and may be forced to pay as much as 30 percent of their salaries as a commission to the loan sharks or drug financiers who've set up ad hoc check-cashing operations.

The Panamanian people were prepared to make certain sacrifices to overthrow what is perceived as a corrupt and morally bankrupt regime. But as time wears on and the sanctions fail to achieve their intended effect, resentment toward the United States grows. "We don't accept the fact that you have to destroy the economy of the country to destroy Noriega," says Luis Alberto Prescott, Secretary-General of the university workers' union.

Resentment of the sanctions has been fanned by the government-controlled media, which have variously described the sanctions as "imperialist aggression" or "acts of war" against the Panamanian people. Some leftist groups that support Noriega are even demanding that the U.S. pay reparations to Panama for the damage done to the economy. The Reagan administration has had to backtrack on some of the sanctions which were causing undue hardship for American businessmen and innocent Panamanians. It recently adopted an exemption allowing both the Canal administration and American businesses to make social security payments to the government for their Panamanian employees. The Noriega regime was threatening to cut off these employees' access to a government health-care system if the taxes continued to be withheld.

The sanctions were never very popular with the American business community in Panama, according to one U.S. executive who asked not to be identified. The objective of many U.S. companies is to continue operating as normally as possible, even where that means skirting the spirit, if not the letter, of the sanctions. For example, while U.S. law bars the companies from paying income taxes, they legally can cash Panamanian government checks for the amount of taxes owed and then put the checks aside.



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The Reagan administration's latest action in denying Noriega and his close associates entry visas to the U.S. was applauded by the opposition as a measure which directly harms Noriega's cronies without hurting the rest of the Panamanian population as well. "These are the people who denounce the U.S. and then the first thing they do is to run to the U.S. for vacation or to go shopping," says opposition member Fernando Boyd.

Whatever Noriega's success in manipulating anti-American sentiment, he could not have managed to survive without resorting to repression. A series of massive demonstrations organized by the Cruzada Civilista (Civilian Crusade)—a loose coalition of civic, business, and professional groups—were violently dispersed by the National Guard. Unarmed, the demonstrators' sole weapons were the white handkerchiefs they waved as a sign of their peaceful intentions. But Noriega's troops unleashed tear gas and attack dogs to break up the crowds. Demonstrators were beaten and arrested en masse. While they were generally detained for short periods of time ranging from several hours to four days, demonstrators were reportedly beaten, sexually assaulted, or otherwise mistreated while in jail. According to Boyd, a member of the Crusade's steering committee, Noriega's troops "raped some of the women and sexually abused even the men. They raped daughters in front of their parents. The prisoners were released and then went back home and told their friends about what had happened to them. This caused a tremendous fear in the population."

The Crusade had been able to mobilize thousands to turn out and protest. But once it became clear Noriega was prepared to use lethal force, the Crusade stopped calling for demonstrations. "We couldn't fight guns with stones, and a decision was made to conserve human life," said Boyd. "I think we made the right decision," he adds. U.S. officials, however, seem disappointed the Crusade did not mount increased resistance.

The government has shut down the antigovernment media, revoking the broadcast licenses of opposition T.V. stations. Several foreign correspondents have been expelled. Those American reporters who reside in the country must be cautious about what they publish for fear their work permits will be denied or revoked. The Panamanian Journalists Association last month urged the government to refuse to allow foreign correspondents, particularly Americans, to enter the country because of their "distorted" reporting of local events.

The Catholic church has supported the Crusade, at first calling for an impartial investigation into the charges against Noriega and then for his resignation. Archbishop McGrath served for a time as a mediator between the government and the opposition, but Noriega undermined the talks by refusing to participate himself, leaving the door open for him to repudiate any eventual accord. The church has issued public statements in favor of democracy and condemning both human-rights abuses and appeals to a "false nationalism"—a not-so-veiled reference to Noriega's efforts to whip up anti-American sentiment. Nevertheless, the Panamanian church has not taken as aggressive a role as did the Salvadoran under Archbishop Romero. This more cautious stance is probably the result of the fact that a high percentage of Panama's priests are foreign, and thus vulnerable to government expulsion.

What are the alternatives for U.S. policy after a year of unsuccessful efforts to oust Noriega and bring democracy to Panama? The U.S. could try to jack up the pressure on Noriega, but political observers here don't believe that will necessarily work unless the U.S. is prepared to take the ultimate step of military intervention (or at least can convince Noriega of its readiness to do so). Alternatively, and more likely, the U.S. will simply allow the Noriega regime to simmer slowly in its own problems, hoping that the economic disfunctions generated by the sanctions, when combined with ongoing repression and corruption, will cause the kettle to boil over. Diplomats see two hopeful signs: the likelihood of a political confrontation between the government and the labor unions over mass firings of government workers, and Noriega's formation of a special "Strategic Military Council" composed of younger majors and captains, indicating, they claim, that Noriega no longer fully enjoys the support of the General Staff of older, more experienced officers. Panamanians, however, believe that Noriega has made so many enemies during his years in power, including members of the powerful Medellin drug-trafficking cartel, that he will never voluntarily leave the country for fear he will be killed. In the meantime, the General is clearly relishing his ability to make the Colossus of the North look impotent. On the wall of the government press office there hangs a cartoon showing a bust of Noriega carved into Mount Rushmore. LINDA DRUCKER

Linda Drucker has worked as a reporter for Time *and* Reuters. *As a free-lance writer, she has traveled widely in Central and South America. Presently the managing editor of the* Stanford Journal of International Law, *she has recently returned from a trip to Panama.*

REPORT FROM ALGIERS

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD
THE WEST BANK COMES HOME

The Arab Summit in Algeria had a spectacular opening on June 7. Just a few hours before the first session, Morocco's King Hassan made a majestic entrance, sailing into the Port of Algiers aboard his own ocean liner. His arrival in the capital marked the restoration of Moroccan-Algerian relations, which he had broken off in 1976. Tens of thousands of cheering Algerians turned out to give a tumultuous welcome to North Africa's only ruling monarch, proving that even in austere, revolutionary Algeria, people still know style when they see it. Algerian President Chadli Benejedid kept a dour expression throughout.

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Brother Muammar, as Hassan referred to his Libyan arch-rival, Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, was also a good show in his flowing white robes, high-heeled white boots, and a single white glove on his right hand so that if he had to shake hands with other Arab heads of state, he wouldn't be contaminated by any "lackeys of imperialism." Qaddafi meant Hassan in particular, whom he has never forgiven for meeting with former Israeli Prime Minister Simon Peres in 1986. This was Qaddafi's first Arab summit in a decade. By the end, for the first time ever, North Africa's five leaders managed to sit together in order to discuss unifying the Maghreb as an economic bloc.

But Maghrebi concerns were only a sideshow, as were the questions of Egypt's readmission to the Arab League and the latest violence in Lebanon. Even the Iran-Iraq War, cause célèbre of the last Arab summit in Amman, was mentioned only perfunctorily. The successful Iraqi offensive on the Fao Peninsula in April and the apparent waning of Ayatollah Khomeini's health have diminished the Persian menace. The major theme of the Algiers pow-wow was inescapable. Between speeches, closed circuit TV monitors showed endless reruns of scenes from the *Intifadah*, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories: Israeli soldiers clubbing and shooting, Palestinian youths throwing stones and flashing the victory sign.

The same images, seen on television sets in every Arab country, have been a double-edged sword for the presidents, kings, and emirs who constitute the established Arab order. There is, of course, Arab pride in erasing twenty years of Palestinian Arab docility under Israeli occupation. But the pictures of exhilarated young civilians battling a well-armed, well-trained army also carry a darker message to the Arab masses. It is a message of insurrection from the have-nots: even against long odds it is possible to shake up the system and stake a claim.

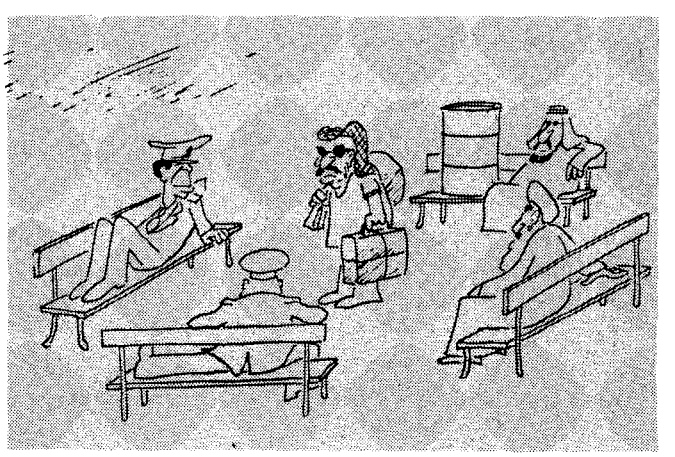
Palestinian nationalism has been a radical force in Arab politics. It destabilized Jordan in 1970 and plunged Lebanon into civil war six years later. The Arab Summit in Algiers, then, was a command performance by the haves, Arab heads of state, who turned up to bow to the stone-throwers of the West Bank and Gaza who have taken their fate into their own hands and captivated the imagination of the Arab man in the street for whom the Palestinian cause still has great emotional resonance. My Algerian cab driver went so far as to say "the French never treated us as badly as the Israelis are treating the Palestinians." In fact, a million-and-a-half Algerians died in the war of independence.

The atmosphere reeked of damage control as the summiteers paid lip service to the cause, and promised that their checks were in the mail. Arafat had asked for a fund of $1 million a day to pay for food, medical care, and striking workers' salaries in the West Bank and Gaza. Instead the Arab states pledged $118 million annually. Everyone claimed to be happy with the outcome. The summit had succeeded in institutionalizing the *Intifadah*, with some heads of state calling it a "new Arab-Israeli War." It was a public relations gambit aimed at showing Arab subjects that their rulers were standing on the right side of the barricades.

The meeting had begun with Arafat's senior aide and PLO spokesman, Bassam Abu Sharif, charging that "Arab officialdom was guilty of dereliction of duty toward the Palestinian uprising in the occupied land." But by the end, the fix was in and Arafat changed his tune, declaring the summit a "great victory." It was, in fact, less than he had hoped for. Having ridden the coattails of the *Intifadah* back to the center of the Arab stage, Arafat wanted "sole and legitimate" control over the purse strings of the $118-million fund. Instead, he was forced to continue a sharing arrangement with Jordan's King Hussein. Nor was the PLO permitted to claim the uprising as its own. Initially Arafat had to struggle to assert his centrality to the uprising and show that the dog was wagging the tail; now the Arab elites had transformed it from a Palestinian into an Arab revolt.

Only Jordan's King Hussein still seemed sulky. If Qaddafi won best costume, then Hussein certainly won best dramatic monologue. It was the summit's high point. In a thirty-two-page speech, remarkable for its bitterness and defensiveness, the king offered a revealing look at how low his relations with the Palestinians of the West Bank have sunk. He began by reprimanding West Bank youth, who made the *Intifadah*, for their faulty history, accusing them of mimicking "the Israeli line" that Jordan's rule over the West Bank from 1948 to 1967 was just as much of an occupation as Israel's rule has been since. "Union" not "occupation " was the correct word during the pre-1967 period, said the wounded Hashemite. He reminded the *shibab* (young men) that in 1950, Jordanian and Palestinian delegates held conventions in Amman and Jerusalem where they voted for the West Bank's inclusion into the Kingdom of Jordan, opting against creating an independent Palestinian state.

Even so, for most West Bankers, memories of the "union" with Jordan are not quite so misty-eyed. In David Grossman's *The Yellow Wind*, Ramallah lawyer Raja Shehadeh recalls how West Bank residents were forced to line the route of the king's motorcade to his summer palace, sometimes standing in the hot sun for hours. But times change. And exposure not just to Israel's army but also to the ways of its democracy have helped



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evolve the fierce nationalism that has taken root in the West Bank and Gaza.

The king forgot to mention that. Instead, he swore up and down that he didn't crave even one inch of West Bank territory. Since he didn't stand up when he read his speech, nobody checked to see if he was keeping his fingers crossed. But I believe him. Sixty percent of Jordan's population is already Palestinian. Why would Hussein want to add another million West Bank Palestinians? Hussein called U.S. policy in the region Israel's policy, and said the U.S. only practiced "crisis management" when Israel's interests were at risk. There was a stifled undercurrent of hysteria in Hussein's subtext in which he admitted that the *Intifadah* had placed the West Bank out of his reach and went on to say that the flames could spread to the East Bank too if things went on unchecked. He appealed to the Arabs for funds and reminded the ungrateful West Bank Palestinians that Jordan was still paying the salaries of eighteen thousands workers and maintaining various ministries in the Occupied Zone.

But Hussein did not come out and say that he had a Palestinian problem of his own. He conjured up the danger in the specter of Israel's right-wing, which has plans, said the king, for a "transfer," a term that has come to mean the forced deportation of West Bank Arabs to the East Bank. In the end, the king got quite a bit of sympathy. Everybody said it was some speech. He also got control over part of the newly allocated fund. But somehow, he still didn't look happy.

TERENCE WRONG

Terence Wrong, who has covered the Middle East for ten years, is a producer for ABC News.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

THE WAY THINGS WORK

FACING REALITY STILL MATTERS

The once much-heralded "Catholic moment" in American history seems to be passing without much effect on American life and culture. It occurs to me that this may be so because we Catholics and those who represent us have been thinking more of *what* we have to offer than *how* we offer it.

Political analysts this year agree on one thing when they come back from their forays around the country: most Americans, whatever their personal well-being, are anxious and profoundly uneasy about the future. Because of change. Unassimilated change. Change over which they seem to have no control. Change in values. Change in mores. Change in our place in the world. An America still unsettled by the discovery that all wars are not winnable for us; that we have not always been "the good guys," and the slow realization that the bomb altered things forever; that America stands vertiginous on the brink of one change in perception after the other.

We Americans know, for example, the facts of our economic reality but we have not yet accepted the picture of our country as a debtor nation dependent on the investment of foreign nations. Or that we no longer lead the world in trade or productivity, that our basic industries deteriorate, that we depend for employment on "service" occupations. "Whichever of the candidates is perceived as best equipped to help us cope with change," said a thoughtful newsman the other night, "is the one who will win this fall."

Change has been unsettling within the church as well and one of the reasons we have not seized the "Catholic moment." Changes in church practice. Changes in the people of the church. Changes in the relationship of the church to the world. Surely change is the law of life but it is positive only when it is the result of growth and that growth is organic. It cannot be accomplished by fiat. On the other hand, when it is organic it cannot be halted by edict.

Splendid as Vatican II was—for many in the church a flowering of what had been hoped and worked for for over a century—its mandates were deeply disturbing to the many who had not been prepared. Changes in the liturgy, for instance, were decreed and executed in the old authoritarian way. Those of us who had argued for the vernacular were made happy (to a certain extent only, if we cared about music and the beauty and rhythms of language—another story) but for the many who drew sustenance from the remote mysteriousness of the Latin Mass, those who were comforted by popular devotions, the sudden change was experienced as a deprivation. In retrospect we can see that the *way* of change was, in part, the root of the tension which exists today between the so-called conservatives and liberals in the American church.

The marking of the twentieth anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* evokes the memory of a storm in the church and furnishes us with an illustration of the clash when edict meets growth. In 1968 Catholics had been led to believe that there would be a development in church teaching drawn from the experience of the whole people of God, only to be met once again with moral teaching argued from abstraction. Whether one accepts the teaching or not, it cannot be denied that the practical effect of the encyclical was to render the teaching irrelevant. It does no violence to the memory of a pastoral, caring, and anguished pope, Paul VI, to note the obvious—most Catholics walked away from the teaching. Had the encyclical been promulgated differently, had clerical dissent from it been more sensitively handled, this result might not have been

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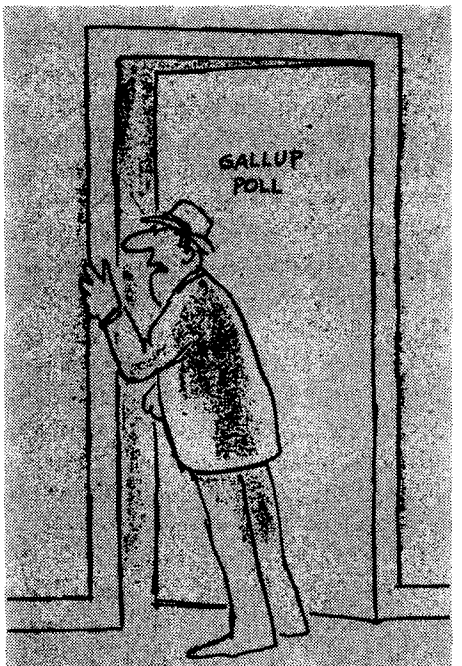

"If you ask my opinion, this country is in big trouble."

different. Yet the church might not have lost so many priests. The residue of bitterness might not have been so deep. Moreover, the persuasive force of the church might not have been diminished—as it was—in the national debate over abortion.

Another such debacle may be shaping up in the ill-considered effort of Vatican authorities to control the internal affairs of Catholic institutions of higher education. Theoretically, the *schema* on universities proposed a few years ago was issued to invite response. That response—especially to the rules suggested for what can and should be taught, and for evaluating faculty on "doctrinal integrity and uprightness of life"—has been negative. Notre Dame's new president, Edward Malloy, C.S.C., is reported to have said that the *schema* would make life in American institutions not only difficult but impossible. Timothy S. Healy, S.J., president of Georgetown, was explicit in an annual report:

> Conflict arises between the church and the university when the two jurisdictions . . . are confused. The university has neither the duty nor the right to determine authoritatively the teaching of the church, but must instead . . . influence respectfully the growth of the church's understanding. In like manner the church cannot . . . control the structure and penalties of the university, questioning its civil contracts, or call upon it to impose civil punishment or exclusion of any of its faculty members.

In view of the status of the Curran case it is doubtful that these responses are being heard. Will our educational institutions be rendered irrelevant at a time when they are sought as guides to change?

Perhaps, after all, in a time of a disappearing clergy, this may become the moment of the laity. If in nothing else, the experience of the laity is in how things work. In a provocative article in the *New Republic* (May 30, 1988) Charles Fager argues that the prolife movement might have had more effect if it adopted "persuasionist" rather than "prohibitionist" strategies, and cites the revolution in the American attitude toward smoking as an example of what he means. (Incidentally, he faces facts squarely—"The issue is not whether women 'should' be the ones making abortion decisions. As a matter of fact they are. . . .")

There is another paradigm for the future in the way in which Admiral James D. Watkins, both an exemplary Catholic and a master strategic planner, has transformed the President's Commission on AIDS from what was almost a laughing stock to a body whose recommendations the executive and the legislative can follow. In Admiral Watkins's own words, the commission "wove a very careful line through this labyrinth" by keeping morals out of the agenda. "This commission is not capable of building a new moral menu for the country," he asserted. In the course of the hearings he instituted, the commission found that AIDS is a much more serious threat to the nation than anticipated and that discrimination is rampant. Watkins also noted something much more wide-reaching:

> We kept pulling the strings and finding all these problems, which tells us that the nation is basically bankrupt in dealing with all of these interrelated social, economic, health, and ethical issues. They are all so tightly woven in the fabric of our society that when we began to expose what was already there through the lens of HIV, it became apparent to me that this was much bigger than HIV.

Such thoughtful and informed scrutiny is basic in helping the nation plan the actions necessary to cope with change. And Rome must be led to perceive that Watkins is no less Catholic, no less a "moral man" (as he describes himself), in the way in which he has faced reality and led others to do so. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS — David R. Carlin, Jr.

FOR LOVE OF THE GAME

POLITICIANS & THEIR SECRET

A few months ago I was inattentively watching a PBS program on Robert Lowell when a remark caught my ear. Someone was saying that a poem is about two things: it's about whatever it is about, and it's also about words. The same line can be said about politics. Politics is about two things: it's about whatever it is about, and it is also about politics. This is a truth that people outside of politics usually do not understand and those inside rarely reflect on. In its more idealistic moods, the public thinks politics is about improving the world; in its more cynical moods, it believes politics is about protecting and enhancing the material interests of politicians and their friends.

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Politicians themselves know better, but they rarely say what they know. When asked off the record why they devote themselves to a crazy game like politics, they usually say one of three things. The idealists say that politics gives them a chance to contribute to the well-being of society; the realists say they enjoy the feeling of power they get from politics; and a few cynics tell you they are in it to feather their own nests.

But the truth is that politicians are in politics for the same reason athletes are in sports. Quite simply, they enjoy the game. Oh, they are in it for the other reasons, too—the idealistic, realistic, and cynical reasons; but the main reason is the sheer fun of the game. Who would believe basketball players who said their principal motive for playing their hearts out was to build character or to get some physical exercise? The main reason people play basketball is that they like playing basketball. Ditto politicians and politics.

In *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith argues that the division of labor arose accidentally from "a certain propensity in human nature . . . to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another." Trade, though it may have the wonderful consequence of creating and ramifying the division of labor, is not engaged in for that purpose; folks trade because it's fun to trade. Moderns like Adam Smith, living in a predominantly commercial civilization, understand that humans are trading animals. Ancients like Aristotle, living in a predominantly political civilization, understood that humans are political animals, that human nature has a "certain propensity" to politics. Like trucking and bartering, politics too has wonderful (and terrible) consequences; but that's not really why people practice it.

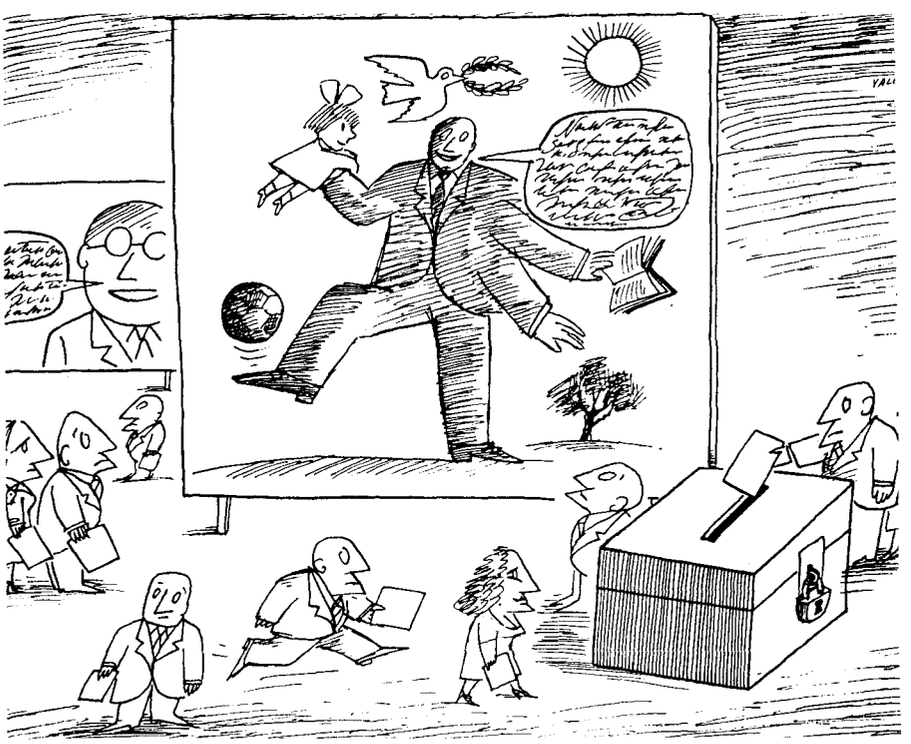
There was at least one ancient, however, who did not understand the nature of politics; or if he understood it, he objected to it so strenuously that he was determined to transform that nature utterly. Plato believed that politics existed, or at least ought to exist, not for its own sake but for the sake of certain nonpolitical ends: speculative truth and moral goodness. Plato's *Republic* is without question the most anti-political book on politics ever written. At the same time, unfortunately, it is the most influential book on politics ever written—the fount and origin of our whole European tradition of political philosophy and political science.

"You can't take the politics out of politics," someone once said. This is a distressing truth for those who believe, like Plato, that politics is not an end in itself but simply a means to some far nobler end. But if you can't take politics out of politics, you can at least take it out of political philosophy; that is what the children of Plato—most political philosophers in the Western tradition—have tended to do for the past 2,300 years. I don't know many practicing politicians who spend much time reading political philosophy; but when they do, they find that it omits the essential thing, the thing that addicts politicians to their calling.

I hate to say it, but there is one great exception to this rule—Machiavelli. I really and truly disapprove of Machiavelli; he was exactly what his and later ages accused him of being, namely, a teacher of evil. But for all his wickedness, and despite the perverse delight he took in being wicked, Machiavelli had a feel for the essence of politics. You cannot read his pages, especially the *Discourses*, without realizing that you are in the presence of the real thing. A contemporary exception to the rule is Hannah Arendt's fine book, *On Revolution*, the best part of which is her dispute with the American Founding Fathers, where she proves that they loved politics for its own sake, despite all their protestations that they engaged in it only as a kind of necessary evil.

Why have these thoughts occurred to me? Because, a practicing politician myself, now in my twenty-first year of playing the game, I have just finished a totally exhausting five-month session in the Rhode Island legislature. For months I have visited home only, it seems, to sleep and eat breakfast. Rarely have I seen my wife and children, even more rarely talked with them. My books have gone unread. It is an inhuman life. At the moment I hate politics; the price paid to participate in it is all out of proportion to any goals realized through it.

Yet I know that once I have recovered my strength and put some distance between myself and the exhaustion of the session, my hatred for politics will pass. My old addiction will once again seize me by the throat. Nothing in Plato explains why this should be so. □



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VITAL DISTINCTIONS, MORTAL QUESTIONS

DEBATING EUTHANASIA & HEALTH-CARE COSTS

DANIEL CALLAHAN

The euthanasia issue is entering a new phase, one likely to be complicated and painful. Though California voters recently defeated an initiative to put a euthanasia referendum on the ballot, public opinion surveys, here and abroad, indicate growing support for active euthanasia and assisted suicide. The de facto legalization of euthanasia in Holland does not necessarily signal the beginning of a larger trend, but its occurrence is a significant break with a long-standing prohibition in Western societies.

This already difficult set of issues is almost certain to be further complicated by the growing need to ration health-care resources. The decision of the Oregon legislature in 1987 to deny organ transplants under its Medicaid program, and to spend the money instead on prenatal care, will not remain an isolated event. Less dramatically but more pervasively, the failure to control medical costs has stimulated a national effort to reduce unnecessary and wasteful treatments. Medical care of the dying or the critically ill—long believed to be a frequent source of doubtful expenditures—has emerged as a place to curtail heavy medical costs.

The conflation of the allocation and euthanasia issues is becoming increasingly evident. On one side are those who argue, with apocalyptic dread, that economic excuses and rigid cost-benefit analysis will now be deployed to carry out what is otherwise unthinkable: to rid our society of the retarded, the handicapped, and the burdensome elderly. David Andrusko, an editor of the *National Right to Life News*, has called this trend a "juggernaut of death." On the other side are those who argue that it is precisely the denial of a right to die that grievously exacerbates our financial plight. Patients need more power, they say, including the right to active euthanasia and assisted suicide and the means to curb the physicians' appetite for aggressive medicine regardless of a patient's prospects. As William S. Kilbourne, Jr., put it in the *Euthanasia Review*, "not all the torture dealt out by all of the totalitarian governments in the world causes as much pain as overtreatment of the terminally ill."

These new developments raise two questions. Does the long-standing Western tradition that rejects active euthanasia and assisted suicide have the intellectual resources to withstand the growing pressures to legitimate them? Does that same tradition also have the resources to cope with the allocation issue, and to do so in a way that respects human life and dignity? I think that it is rich enough to encompass both problems simultaneously, but that at some crucial points it needs further work and elaboration. The tradition must strengthen the arguments against active euthanasia and, at the same time, develop morally justifiable criteria for limiting life-sustaining health care at the societal level by defining the circumstances when such limitation is necessary or sensible.

1 Does the long-standing Western tradition that rejects active euthanasia and assisted suicide have the intellectual resources to withstand the growing pressures to legitimate them?

What is behind the change in public opinion on euthanasia? A great deal of the emerging debate is coming to turn on not simply what is, or may be, happening, but also on what it means and how it should be interpreted. Let me venture an interpretation.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Since the 1970s, death has been an institutional event, with over 80 percent of deaths occurring in hospitals. Even those dying in nursing homes are likely, in an acute crisis, to be taken to a hospital. Hospitals themselves have become different institutions, more than ever oriented to intensive care. Once in hospitals, patients are faced with a strong bias toward aggressive technological care. They will be treated by doctors nervous about malpractice suits, but in any case trained to save life unless there is a powerful presumption against it and, most

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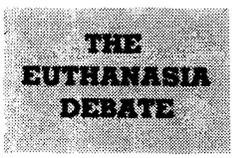
important, increasingly ingenious in the extension of life against great odds. When a patient dies in a hospital it is almost always now the result of some conscious decision, the result of a medical power able to give almost every patient at least a few more hours or days. Patients are as a rule more quickly put on respirators than was the case twenty years ago, and they are much more likely to be fed artificially should their critical illness render them incapable of or uninterested in eating.

Beyond the hospital setting there have been other important general trends. The broadest and most encompassing is the increase in chronic illness, particularly that ensuing upon acute episodes of life-saving interventions. More of those episodes are followed by a long decline toward death, often marked by sporadic acute recurrences where the patient is brought through once again. An increase in the time between the determination of a terminal illness, or fatal disease, and death is still another important change, now reaching three years in the case of cancer deaths. An extended life with a chronic illness, and an extended dying, are growing consequences of improved medical care. As Arthur Barsky, M.D., has noted in his new book, *Worried Sick: Our Troubled Quest for Wellness* (Little, Brown, 1988), "while more effective medical care enables us to live longer, the *proportion* of life spent in ill health has actually *increased*." It is these "failures of success" that account for the rising incidence of some late-onset diseases, such as Alzheimer's.

General public awareness of these shifts is an important reason, I am convinced, for the rise of interest in active euthanasia. Public opinion surveys have indicated a sharp shift in that direction. Comparative Louis Harris surveys show that 53 percent of respondents in 1973 opposed active euthanasia (with 37 percent favorable), while by 1985, 61 percent were favorable, with only 36 percent opposed. These changes closely parallel changes in medical practice, especially the shift to deaths in institutional settings. It is plausible to think that the public has become more fearful of an extended or painful death, and wants active euthanasia to regain mastery over medical attitudes and technologies it believes can no longer be controlled.

There is an alternative interpretation. In this view, our culture is now disposed to take the value of life less seriously than it once did. The greatest danger is not that patients will be overtreated or their lives too long extended, but that socially burdensome patients will be targeted for elimination, sacrificial victims on the altar of cost-benefit analysis. I have no doubt that the seeds of such a possibility are present—one can find some indication of just about any trend one likes in this area—but there is as yet no good *evidence* that it is strong or widespread. A reported increase in mortality rates in some places as a result of the diagnostic related groups (DRG) cost-containment strategy under Medicare is, however, the kind of evidence that should be followed. Its meaning is not yet clear.

In any event, the fear of a shift to active euthanasia, a fear made more credible by the polls, has been the stimulus behind prolife resistance to almost all proposed legal changes. Living will legislation, for instance, is looked upon as the leading wedge of a value system whose acceptance will lead first to legitimating active euthanasia, and then to killing the weak and powerless. While there is now said to be less total resistance to policy change among prolife groups, and some actual recent initiatives, their political power has intimidated politicians. Within medicine, a fear of indictment in some places for termination of treatment and a more generalized anxiety about malpractice suits (however overblown in actuality) has created a climate of uneasiness. For most physicians, the course of least resistance is simply to treat, and the more aggressive their treatment, the safer they feel. Here is where things come full circle: an awareness of that physician-nervousness serves all the more to increase patient anxiety. It begins to seem that only acceptance of a policy of active euthanasia will prevent the possibility of overtreatment.



While the euthanasia movement has deep historical roots, going back to Greek and Roman times, it has had a special force in the West for a number of decades (and in England since the nineteenth century). Its primary argument has always been a relatively simple one: a dying person (or one whose life has become intolerably burdensome) has the right to have his or her life ended by another if that is necessary to avoid suffering. The popular phrase "mercy killing" refers to the killing of one person by another as an act of kindness, not as an act of malice or self-interest on the part of the one who does the killing (or assists in a suicide). The moral foundation of this claimed right is that our body is our own, and that our life should be subject to our self-determination. We have, then, a right to end our own life; and if we cannot accomplish that on our own, another person has the right to end it for us, as an act of compassion. These arguments gain weight from the reality that contemporary medicine can and does draw out our dying, or our suffering lives, beyond all decent limits. That we could, by providing more choice to patients, also reduce unnecessary and unwanted costs is still another important consideration; individual and social good could be jointly served.

The persuasiveness of these arguments seems to be growing for many. Can they effectively be resisted—as I think they must be? The most common objection to active euthanasia is based on the abuses it could engender. Even if one grants a right to have one's life ended, how could it safely be enacted into law? How could even a carefully drawn law avoid possible outright coercion of dying patients, or more likely their subtle manipulation? There are many reasons why the death of one person can be of advantage to another. In a society less than pleased to care for those who are costly or burdensome, the social pressures in that direction would be all the stronger.

Beyond that plausible possibility is the further danger of a move to involuntary euthanasia. If there are some lives "not worth living"—and not just the lives of the terminally ill but of others whose quality of life is low—why not, then, for their sake as well as that of society, simply end those lives? The

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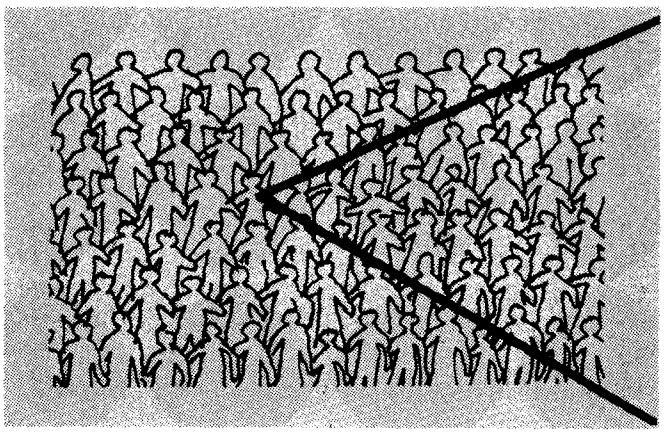
right to die could become a duty to die. The likelihood that society will ride this slippery slope, from voluntary to involuntary, *may* increase once the principle of direct killing has been introduced. Reasons of both expediency and mercy will have been used to make that introduction acceptable.

To all of these long-standing objections, I would add another. Precisely because of the growing need for health-care rationing, there is all the more reason to avoid the possible abuses of active euthanasia. The attraction of using it as a way of assisting cost-containment efforts would increase the risks of abuse all the more. The cleaner the separation between rationing and euthanasia, the better.

Nonetheless, more work is needed to develop the reasons for opposition to active euthanasia, reasons that do not depend too heavily on possible abuses. Those of us who use such arguments against euthanasia should realize that, for all of their intuitive plausibility, they rest upon a calculus of probabilities that has little grounding in history or experience. The often-invoked Nazi analogy has limited value for our situation. The Nazis did not start with voluntary euthanasia and move on to involuntary euthanasia; they started with the latter, and their rationale for involuntary euthanasia had nothing to do with either self-determination or the avoidance of medical overtreatment. These slippery slope arguments are, then, not fully adequate.

A traditional religious position has supplied the missing argument: self-determination does not extend to a right to take our own life; God alone has the right to take innocent life. For many, that belief remains the ground for resistance. But it will have limited force in the secular domain. We need a more philosophical argument, not dependent on religious premises, that might have a comparable force, and that would apply even if one granted that patients have a right to take their own lives (now legal in most states). If such a right is conceded, does it follow that another may be given the right to kill such patients? I do not think so.

John Stuart Mill, in his classic work, *On Liberty*, argued that the one exception to our right to do with our person as we will is the right to sell ourselves into slavery. "By selling himself for a slave," he wrote, "[a person] abdicates his liberty; he foregoes any future use of it beyond the single act . . . The principle of freedom cannot require that he should be free not to be free. It is not freedom to be allowed to alienate his freedom."



There is a parallel here: to cede to another the right to kill us is to give that person the power to remove our freedom once and for all. The reason even voluntary slavery is wrong is not simply that we ought not, in the name of mercy or freedom, be able to alienate our freedom so fundamentally, but also that no other person should be given so total and decisive a power over our life. That is the most basic threat to, or violation of, the right of self-determination that can be imagined. However strong the motive to do so, that fundamental right cannot be set aside without contradicting its very nature. If I am by right master of my fate, I cannot transfer my right of mastery to another, nor can any other person receive it from me.

To ask another to be the agent of my death, moreover, would cease to be simply an expression of my isolated autonomy. It would create a profound relationship between that other person and myself, transcending our individual acts. From the side of the person who killed me his would be an irrevocable act, one that becomes his act as much as mine. From my side, I would be recruiting an accomplice, asking him to take into his hands a decisive power over me, one that could not be recalled once he had acted. I see no moral basis for so ultimate a transfer of the power of life and death. It is more than the principle of self-determination historically has, or morally should, encompass.

2 Does Western tradition have the resources to cope with the allocation of health-care resources in a way that respects human life and dignity?

The euthanasia and allocation debates are easily likely to mutually confuse, even pollute each other. To avoid that, it is necessary to be clear about the difference between directly killing a known patient and making an allocation decision whose effect will be to allow many to die who might otherwise be saved. How can it be morally plausible to condemn the one but allow the other? In the first section, I have tried to sketch, all too briefly, why I think that the traditional prohibition of direct killing has been correct: active euthanasia runs the risk of corruption and wrongly extends to another the right to control our bodies.

But of late, the strongest challenge to the tradition has been a denial that there is a meaningful distinction to be made between killing and allowing to die, between an act of commission and one of omission. While this challenge comes most strongly from those favoring the legalization of active euthanasia, it seems to draw at least implicit or inadvertent support from some prolife groups as well. Supporters of euthanasia argue that if there is no serious distinction to be drawn between killing and allowing to die, then our present acceptance of allowing to die ought to be extended to active killing, when such killing would be more merciful. Prolife groups may

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acknowledge a strictly logical distinction between the two, but argue that "allowing to die" is a slogan that has come to be used as a legitimizing rationale to end the lives of those who are burdensome or judged to have lives not worth living. This simultaneous challenge from the liberals and the conservatives promises maximum confusion, making it that much harder to discuss carefully the euthanasia issue and all but impossible to consider coherently the allocation problem.

MAINTAINING THE DISTINCTION

My contention is that, properly understood, the distinction between killing and allowing to die is still perfectly valid for use, both in the euthanasia debate and in the allocation discussion. The distinction rests on the commonplace observation that lives can come to an end as the result of (a) the direct action of another who becomes the cause of death (as in shooting a person), or as the result of (b) impersonal forces where no human agent has acted (death by lightning or by disease).

The purpose of the distinction is to separate those deaths directly caused by human action, and those caused by nonhuman events. It is, as a distinction, meant to say something about human beings and their relationship to the world. It attempts to articulate the difference between those actions for which human beings can rightly be held responsible and those of which they are innocent. At the heart of the issue is a distinction between physical causality—the realm of impersonal events—and moral culpability—the realm of human responsibility.

Little imagination is required to see how the distinction between killing and allowing to die can be challenged. The standard objection encompasses two points. The first is that people can die equally by our omissions as well as our commissions: we can refrain from saving them when it is possible to do so and they will be just as dead as if we shot them. Our decision itself, and not necessarily how we effectuate that decision, is the reason for their death. That fact establishes the basis of the second point: if we *intend* a person's death, it can be brought about as well by acts we omit as by those we commit; the crucial moral point is not how the person dies, but our intention. We can, then, be responsible for the death of another by intending that they die and we accomplish that end by standing aside and allowing them to die.

Despite these criticisms—resting upon ambiguities that can readily be acknowledged—the distinction between killing and allowing to die remains valid. It has not only a logical validity but, no less important, a social validity whose place must be as central in moral judgments about allocation as in individual patient decisions. As a way of elucidating the distinction, I propose that it is best understood as expressing three different, though overlapping, perspectives on nature and human action: metaphysical, moral, and medical.

Metaphysical The first and most fundamental premise of the distinction between killing and allowing to die is that there is a sharp difference between the self and the external world. Unlike the childish fantasy that the world is nothing more than a projection of the self, or the neurotic person's fear that he or she is responsible for everything that goes wrong, the distinction is meant to uphold a simple notion: there is a world external to the self that has its own, and independent, causal dynamism. A conflation of killing and allowing to die mistakenly assumes that the self has become master of everything within and outside of the self. It is as if the conceit that modern humans might ultimately control nature has been internalized: that, if the self might be able to influence nature by its actions, then the self and nature must be one.

But, of course, that is a fantasy. The fact that we can intervene in nature, and cure or control many diseases, does not erase the difference between the self and the external world. It is as "out there" as ever, even if more under our sway. But that sway, however great, is always limited. We can cure disease, but not always the chronic illness that follows the cure. We can forestall death with modern medicine, but death always wins because of the body's inherent limitations, stubbornly beyond final human control. We can distinguish between an aging body and a diseased body, but in the end they always become one and the same body. To attempt to deny the distinction between killing and allowing to die is, then, mistakenly to impute more power to human action than it actually has and to accept the conceit that nature has now fallen wholly within the realm of human control.

Moral At the center of the distinction between killing and allowing to die is the difference between physical causality and moral culpability. On the one hand, to bring the life of another to an end by an injection is to directly kill the other—our action is the physical cause of death. On the other hand, to allow someone to die from a disease we cannot cure (and that we did not cause) is to permit the *disease* to act as the cause of death. The notion of physical causality in both cases rests on the metaphysical distinction between human agency and the action of external nature. The ambiguity arises precisely because we can be morally culpable of killing someone (unless we have a moral right to do so, as in self-defense) and no less culpable for allowing someone to die (if we have both the possibility and the obligation of keeping that person alive). Thus there are cases where, morally speaking, it makes no difference whether we killed or allowed to die; we are equally responsible morally. In those cases, the lines of physical causality and moral culpability happen to cross. Yet the fact that they can cross *in some cases* in no way shows that they are always, or even usually, one and the same. We can usually dissect the difference in all but the most obscure cases. We should not, then, use the ambiguity of such cases to do away altogether with the distinction between killing and allowing to die. Ambiguity may obscure, but it does not erase the line between the two.

There is one group of ambiguous cases that is especially troublesome. Even if we grant the ordinary validity of the distinction between killing and allowing to die, what about those cases that combine (a) an illness that renders a patient unable to carry out an ordinary biological function (to eat or

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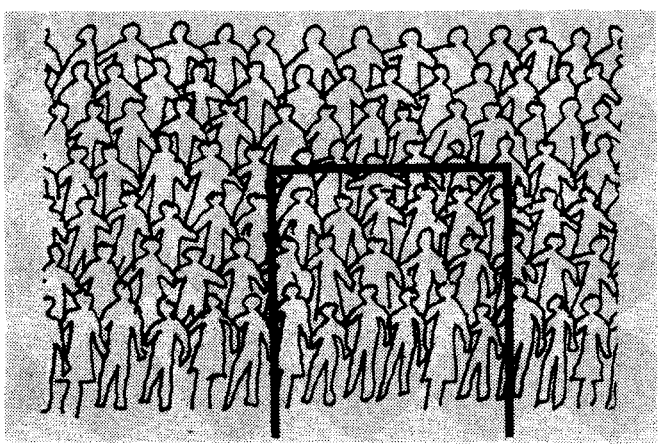
breathe unassisted, for example), and (b) our decision to turn off a respirator or remove an artificial feeding tube? On the level of physical causality, have we killed the patient or allowed the person to die? In one sense, it is our action that shortens the person's life, and yet in another sense it is the underlying disease that brings that life to an end. I believe it reasonable to say that, since this person's life was being sustained by artificial means (respirator or tube), and that was necessary because of the presence of an incapacitating disease, the disease is the ultimate reality behind the death. Were it not for the disease, there would be no need for artificial sustenance in the first place and no moral issue at all. To lose sight of the paramount reality of the disease is to lose sight of the difference between ourselves and the outer world. Our action may hasten, but does not finally cause, this death.

I quickly add, and underscore, a moral point: the person who, without good moral reason, turns off a respirator or pulls a feeding tube, can be morally culpable if there is no good reason to do so. (To cease treatment may or may not be morally acceptable.) The moral question is whether we are obliged to continue treating a life that is being artificially sustained.

There is an analogous issue of importance. Physicians frequently feel morally more responsible for stopping the use of a life-saving device than for not using it in the first place. While the psychology behind that feeling is understandable, there is no significant moral difference between withholding and withdrawing treatment. The point of this now almost universal denial is precisely that an intervention into the disease process does not erase the underlying disease. To accept the fact that a disease cannot be controlled, though an effort was made to do so, is as morally acceptable as deciding in advance that it cannot be successfully controlled.

Medical The main social purpose of the distinction between killing and allowing to die has been that of protecting the historical role of the physician as one who tries to cure or comfort patients rather than kill them. Physicians have been given special knowledge about the body, knowledge that can be used to kill or to cure. They are also given great privileges in making use of that knowledge. It is thus all the more important that their social role and power be, and be seen to be, a limited power. That power may be used only to cure or comfort, never to kill. Otherwise, it would open the way for powerful misuse and, no less important, represent an intrinsic violation of what it has traditionally meant to be a physician.



Yet if it is possible for physicians to misuse their knowledge and power in order to kill people directly, are they therefore required to use that same knowledge always to keep people alive, always to resist a disease that can kill the patient? The traditional answer has been: not necessarily. For the physician's ultimate obligation is to the welfare of the patient, and excessive treatment can be as detrimental to that welfare as inadequate treatment. Put another way, the obligation to resist the lethal power of disease is limited—it ceases when the patient is unwilling to have it resisted, or when the resistance no longer serves the patient's welfare. Behind this moral premise is the recognition that disease (of some kind) ultimately triumphs, and that death is both inevitable and not always the greatest human evil. To demand of physicians that they always struggle against disease, as if it were always in their power to conquer it, would be to fall into the same metaphysical trap mentioned above: that of assuming that no distinction can be drawn between natural and human agency.

THE ALLOCATION DEBATE

If the implications of doing away with the distinction between killing and allowing to die are momentous for the euthanasia debate and the treatment of individual patients, they are equally grave in their implications for the allocation debate. It is hard, in fact, to see how we can have a reasonable allocation debate without making the distinction central to that debate. Without it, we face a number of stark alternatives. If we cannot morally distinguish between killing and allowing to die, then every allocation decision can be construed as directly killing those who lose out in the process. A refusal to provide life-saving coverage under an entitlement program will be seen as a means of active *involuntary* euthanasia. To allocate money, say, to education rather than to health care could be seen as a decision to kill people for the sake of education (more specifically, to kill the sick to help children).

Given that understanding, health needs would ordinarily trump all other social claims (unless they could be justified also on health grounds); any other choice would be seen as direct killing. I do not invoke here a hypothetical worry. Even now, those who have tried to limit health allocations have been accused by some of using financial arguments as a covert way of ridding society of people unwanted on other grounds, or simply thought too burdensomely expensive to be worth support. Others have been no less quick to complain: for a society to deny health resources to the needy, or to want to limit an entitlement program, is a murderous course, a selfish way to keep for oneself resources that would save the lives of others.

I believe that way of thinking, whether from right or left, is misleading and harmful. To deny the distinction between killing and allowing to die, and then to use that denial as a way of circumventing a necessary debate or decision about alloca-

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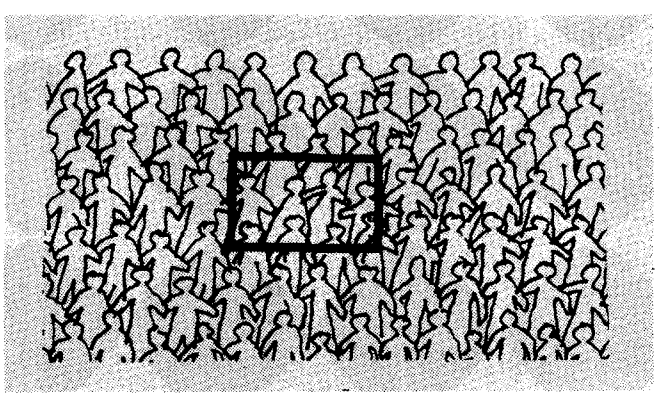
tions, only adds a social error to a metaphysical one. To say this is not to deny that allocation decisions have important life-and-death implications, or that some allocation decisions could be used to mask abominable moral attitudes or practices; or that, in practice, some allocation decisions can be wrong or unfair. I am only trying to say that issues of this kind must be decided on their merits and not dealt with by ignoring or confusing the distinction between killing and allowing to die. That helps nothing.

How, then, can we make difficult allocation decisions in ways that avoid any suggestion that they are being used as a way of wrongly killing people? Or of making them in ways that properly allow us to let disease shorten, or end, life? This problem is all the more complicated for affluent nations. For nations that have nothing, there are only "lifeboat" choices, that is, giving only to one because there is not enough for both. For affluent countries the decision is more complex. We could in this country always spend more on health care. But when would it become unreasonable to do so?

It is not easy to find a moral foothold for making such judgments. They must certainly meet some reasonable tests of justice and fairness, both substantively and procedurally. They ought also to reflect some coherent vision of a good society. I will not take up those important questions here. Instead, I want to focus on the problem of finding the limits of our obligations to others. The Catholic tradition, ordinarily thought to be quite conservative on these matters, has long accepted in principle that the imposition of a grave burden on others is a justifiable reason for a person to choose to forgo life-saving care. An important implication of this principle—though rarely drawn—is that neither society nor families have an obligation to take on excessively heavy financial burdens to save the life of another. We can be asked to do our duty toward one another; we cannot be required to act heroically, or severely to jeopardize the welfare of others for whom we may also be responsible.

This principle, though well established, has been little analyzed, perhaps partly because until recently in most developed countries it has usually been possible for families or society to bear the financial burdens, however heavy. The needed resources were available. In practice, moreover, it has been a principle that few would be likely to invoke, particularly within the family; though theoretically justifiable, it could look selfish, and in application could evoke feelings of great doubt and guilt.



There is another problem about the use of this principle. It is inherently communitarian. It recognizes that the common good of families, or society, can and should on occasion take precedence over individual welfare. That is the kind of principle that Americans at least have been reluctant to embrace. To suggest that individuals may not have an unlimited claim on the assistance of their families or neighbors, or that the latter in turn may have only limited obligations to one another, is a disturbing thought. It has ordinarily been evaded by calls to remove excessive burdens from families and to lay them on the state. Only now, when the resources of the state are being stretched and demands upon it seem to be reaching an intolerable limit, can the principle be considered more openly and directly.

Yet how are we to do so in a responsible, fair, and humane way? We might best approach the problem in stages, working first to minimize financial burdens by voluntary methods and then gradually using more stringent methods.

Voluntary methods of choosing treatment Some 25-30 percent of Medicare costs, for instance, are incurred by 5 percent or so of its beneficiaries in their last year of life. Almost everyone can think of friends or family members who seem to have received unnecessary treatment in their dying. A long-standing assumption of many is that greater patient choice, particularly in terminal illness, would significantly reduce costs. Yet there is no actual evidence that greater choice would reduce costs. In the Medicare case, the available evidence suggests that behind the high costs lies the difficulty of making a prognosis that death is imminent. Moreover, no one has shown that the costs, though high, are unreasonable or unjust.

There is an even greater difficulty in relying upon voluntary methods to do a decisive job in lowering costs. As the history of the debate over "death with dignity" and allowing to die has shown, it has been exceedingly hard in practice to make termination decisions. Even when there is general agreement that excessive and unwanted care should not be given, disagreements among physicians and family members, uncertainty of prognosis, and fear of legal or moral liability, have made individual decisions troublesome. "Living will" and durable power-of-attorney statutes are certainly desirable for individual welfare, and may be of some economic help. So is ready access to hospice services and facilities. But there is little in the history of such legislation to date to indicate that it can overcome the reluctance of contemporary medicine to declare that anyone is, in fact, dying, and to give up the hope for therapeutic success that is its driving impetus and the greatest source of constantly escalating costs.

Screening for access to treatment A number of experiments and policies have been established in recent years both to evaluate better the efficacy of various treatments and to limit, by preliminary screening, access to therapies that are

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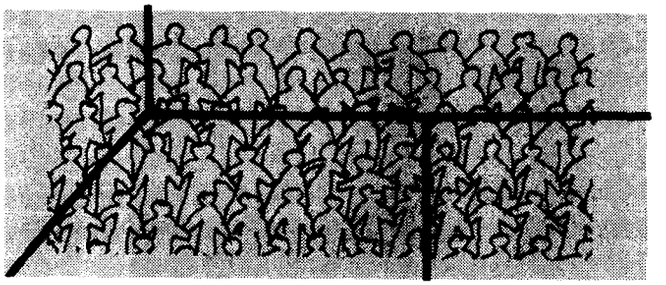
expensive and unlikely to be helpful to some patients. Second opinions prior to surgery, strict criteria of efficacy for admission to intensive-care units, and development of standards for the use of various diagnostic procedures and treatment therapies, are among the techniques being used. Efforts to evaluate the efficacy of various therapies, while widely commended as a goal, have been pursued only fitfully, especially with respect to the development of standards for the termination of a particular treatment. None of these evaluation, prognosis, and screening methods will be of much economic benefit unless their use becomes mandatory. The increased use of preliminary screening will also have to be matched by methods designed to stop those treatments already underway which are ineffective for a significant prolongation of life.

Useless and financially burdensome treatment A striking feature of efforts to increase patient choice and to use scientific methods of evaluation and screening, is that they build upon widely accepted values. The appeal to a combination of freedom and science is a powerful one. Their use to promote efficiency and economic savings only enhances their attractiveness. The same cannot be said for taking the next step: that of possibly refusing to continue what some, but not all, would consider useless treatment, and the use of "excessive financial burden" as a reason to deny treatment that might be efficacious. These work directly against the grain. It would seem to many an outrageous denial of freedom to refuse the choice of a treatment when, at least in the eyes of some, that treatment is perfectly valid. It would seem an offense against justice to deny someone a treatment judged medically and scientifically valid on the grounds of its costs, either to a family or to a society.

But these are just the kinds of decisions we may have to make. Let me stalk them by moving through a sequence. When the death of the whole brain was proposed in the late 1960s as the standard for declaring a person dead, there was great resistance. Physicians argued that it should be left to them to make a choice between the traditional definition—spontaneous cessation of heart and lung activity—and the newer definition of brain death. That argument eventually lost. Today brain death is the accepted medical and legal standard. Once a patient has been declared dead by that standard, medical treatment must be stopped; to continue would be to treat a dead body, by definition "useless" treatment. This standard applies even if, in the eyes of his or her family, a patient is by their lights not dead.

Let us take another step. What about the continued treatment of patients in a permanent vegetative state (PVS)? (PVS is commonly defined as that condition in which higher brain [neocortical] functions have been lost, but the brain stem remains alive.) Should that treatment be considered "useless"? Patients have lived on in this state for years—ten years in the instance of Karen Ann Quinlan and thirty-seven years in another famous case—and there may be ten thousand such patients in the United States today. Recently, various court decisions have upheld the validity of terminating treatment,



including artificially provided food and water. But there are many who think that this is nothing more than a form of direct killing, equivalent to active euthanasia. There is just enough scientific uncertainty about diagnosing PVS (or making definite judgments about the state of consciousness of those in that condition) to give these opponents a small degree of medical credibility. Proponents of continued care, moreover, argue that it is a moral, not a medical judgment, to say that a life of permanent unconsciousness is not a life suitable for sustenance. The moral judgment, they claim, should recognize that no one has the right to judge that the life of another is meaningless.

How might one respond to that view? It is not the task of medicine to decide whose life is worth living; that is indeed a moral issue. But it is the task of those who provide care to make prudent judgments concerning treatment that provides no known medical benefits, and, based on present medical knowledge, to determine when someone has lost the capacity for meaningful personal life—at least to the extent that such life requires some minimal level of intact higher brain activity. These judgments may be wrong, but they are not patently irresponsible or indifferent to human life. They are no more and no less than what they claim to be: prudent judgments based on available knowledge.

Those who make such judgments can reasonably conclude that continued treatment of a PVS patient is "useless" and economically indefensible. A family would certainly be justified in claiming that any financial burden imposed upon it was excessive (for the cost of any useless treatment would be excessive); and the society could well claim that it had no obligation to provide expensively useless treatment (Medicaid has most commonly paid the costs of PVS victims).

There has obviously been a great societal reluctance to follow through on such logic. PVS is an ambiguous category because there is a division of opinion, both medical and moral, about whether sustaining patients by artificial feeding is medical treatment, and about whether it is useful or useless. There are those who believe there are neither medical nor solid moral reasons to stop treatment of those in PVS, particularly the provision of food and water (which some do not want to call "treatment" in any case). Theirs may be a minority voice, but it is a strong one. For another, those who believe continued treatment (including food and water) of PVS is unjustified have been willing to support only court decisions pertinent to individual cases in that respect. There have been no concerted efforts to have Medicaid or Medicare deny payment for care of

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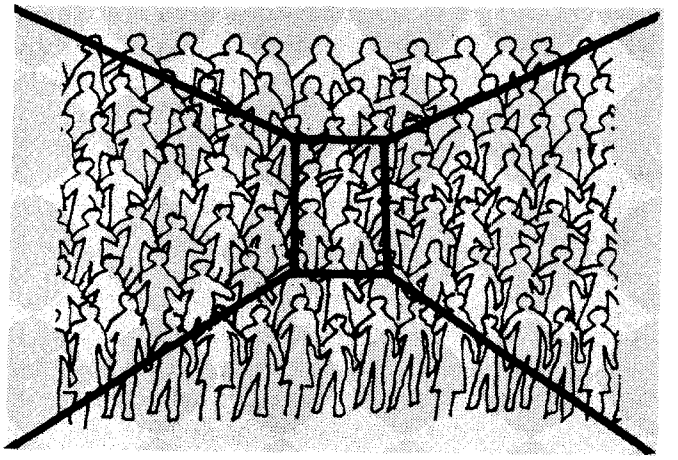
PVS, or to have private insurance carriers do so. It is hard to see how a debate on that reimbursement issue can be forestalled much longer.

Let us take a step to the next category, even more troubling, that of possibly denying the provision of expensive medical treatment that is undeniably efficacious. The most difficult case would be one in which the expensive available treatment is effective and where the prognosis for a full and extended life span is high. This is now the case with kidney, heart, and liver transplants. Since the cost of such transplants is totally beyond the economic capacity of the average family, there has rarely been discussion about families' obligations to take on those costs. Instead, they have resorted either to government support or to public appeals.



SOME BOUNDARY STANDARDS

Must we, however, judge that, in an otherwise affluent society, a government decision to refuse to support organ transplantations would be morally unjustifiable? Or to refuse other forms of expensive, efficacious treatment as well? Can a government claim that the provision of some forms of treatment constitutes a grave and excessive burden—which is, in effect, what the state of Oregon has done? No clear answer can be given to a question of this kind, in part because much depends upon particular circumstances. But it is possible, I believe, to fashion some general standards for assessing those circumstances. I will call them boundary standards.

The first such standard is that government cannot automatically be required to pay the costs of whatever new treatments result from scientific advance. Government cannot be held hostage to medical progress, which in the nature of the case is constantly devising new, and often more expensive, treatments and cures. This is an obvious point, but, in practice, it is widely assumed that, once a treatment has proved efficacious, government is obliged to pay for it; such has been the history of organ transplantation, as it moved from the experimental to proven therapy. The automatic presumption in favor of reimbursement for whatever treatment has been shown efficacious now must give way to one that is more neutral, that is, one subject to other considerations than progress and proven efficacy.

A second standard is that government cannot be obliged to meet every individual medical need, however valid that need. In an earlier time when medicine was comparatively less effective, there was a relatively uniform range of medical costs. Individual costs of care varied, but only within a relatively narrow range. Medical progress has not only raised the costs of care in general, it has also widened the range of costs. As more can be done to save the lives of individuals, and to save the lives of those afflicted with relatively uncommon conditions or syndromes, the range of spending possibilities broadens. Cases with costs of $500,000 to $1 million become more common; and whole categories, such as neonatal care, increase the discrepancies within individual medical subspecialties. To ask government, in the wake of these developments, to provide individual care regardless of the cost, is to ask too much. That is another way of urging the government to sign blank checks, the amount of which is to be determined by unchecked medical progress as it constantly redefines and expands the concept of "need."

A third standard is that government has the obligation to encompass the full range of human needs, not simply health needs, and to address the entire range of conditions and programs that together make up a coherent society. That is a way of saying that a government would be imprudent, if not irresponsible, to give over a disproportionate share of its resources to meet health-care needs, even if some of those needs are matters of life and death for individuals. Societies need education for their children, police and fire protection, national defense, roads and transportation systems, jobs and economic infrastructures, social welfare programs, and so on. It is a long list.

We can ask what is a proportionate share for each of those categories, and as a society we will argue about that. But there is no reason to exempt the health-care sector from that debate. Government would be well justified, I believe, to say that it cannot allow health claims always to override other social claims, to allow expensive individual health needs to overcome public interest needs (organ transplants over schools), or to allow issues of life and death always to trump issues of social amenities (hospitals over parks).

I offer here no formula for making those hard allocation decisions. But I do want to suggest that, just as we would consider it neurotic and hypochondriacal for an individual to give over an excessive portion of his or her psychic energy and economic resources to the preservation of health, the same is possible for a society. We need to scale down the priority routinely given to health-care needs, and to stand firm in the face of the inevitable medical progress that promises to deliver some benefit, even life itself, to some individuals if only we will collectively pay for it. We need to develop a strong capacity to say no to some of these possibilities. We need to combine an ability to determine limits with sensitive and open public debate about just what it is that makes for a good society, and what is the proper and sensible place to be given to the pursuit of health and the avoidance of death. □

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Floyd Skloot

Shoreline Life

We lived seven years
on a strip of sand,
a barrier island shifting
toward land in the hub
of storm-borne overwash fans.

Montauk sat like a saddle
on the south fork's backbone,
cut off from the tides by bluffs.
Cobble beaches at Hither Hills
were signs of ravage made
clearer still by homes
toppled into Shinnecock Inlet.
On Fire Island, low dune lines
from Kismet to Lonelyville made
the risk of flooding greater.

Our place was marked by slow
losses to windswept bayside
rollover. The sound
of surf was always in our ears.
Squalls fierce from their wide
fetch could transport a ton
of sea front in one bad season,
scouring all landmarks.
Steep dunes and salt marsh
grass signalled how fragile
shoreline life could be.

I spent summer hours repeating
the mad dash from a dune's toe
into chest high waves, losing
my breath the instant I needed
it most. Each new year, walking
the profile of a beach braced
flat for winter, I surveyed gray
breakers building bulk for spring.

This was where my father
moved us after his city
life ended. He found us,
at last, a home that could
fade into air and water.

Mark Kirby

Confirmation

Sunbathing, like poetry
  is a communal art
practiced often in private.
  Here by the ocean
with its sufficient music
  geniuses and lovers
lie down together to be
  tongued by the fire.

Flourishes of other lives
  are brought here to be
purified: a book, a sheet,
  a ball gather home
the voluptuous heat
  and burn in rows, each thing,
each being, an offering,
  like a votive flame.

All of the world's edges,
  where the fire appears,
  sustain communicants
  like these, whose benign
patience is rewarded with
  an outward sign.
Sunlight is, after all
  our sole source of life.

And we want to wear its mark,
  feel the weight of its hand.
Creatures of dreaming fire
  round as a white pearl
wait, their naked piety
  an end to desire,
their spent time turning to wood,
  returning to stone.

Norita Dittberner-Jax

It Was Like This

As a young girl it was like this—
slipping out of the cabin
in early morning
down to the dock, easing
the rowboat out
onto the Apple River,
rowing, the perfect intersection
of paddle and water,
muscles pulling in waves
not waking anything, not the fish
my father would catch,
not the life in the cabin (my mother
starting the oatmeal now)
not even wanting to waken myself
from this dream of water.

John Ditsky

Bites

Calamine lotion, I think it was;
And in time the bites went away
Beneath their pink crust. It is thirty,

Forty, years ago—and I think
As I take my time in slapping dead
The black mother on my forearm

How long it's been since I've felt
That itch I couldn't stand to leave
Unscratched. I come in bravely

Now from twilights in July, my arms
And legs blotched red with what
Tomorrow will see gone. But I writhe

Abed with what I cannot scratch
Or salve with lotion, will away,
Or get forgetting to ease down.

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SCREEN

WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST

'BIG,' 'BIG BUSINESS,' & 'A WORLD APART'

Big Business and *Big* prove the timeless appeal of Plautus' comic formula, "trading places." His technique of transposing characters and identities to create sublime confusion inspired Shakespeare, who doubled the pleasure in *A Comedy of Errors*. *Big Business* feminizes the formula, with Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler each playing two roles in sets of unidentical twins. The twins are mismatched because of a mixup in a rural hospital, where one of each pair of newborn sisters is placed in the wrong crib. Thereafter, one of each is out of place. Tomlin is feisty in West Virginia; her lost twin in New York is confused by city life and longs for a home in the country. Midler is a domineering careerwoman in New York, while her misplaced twin in mining country pines for urban excitement. Conventional but well-crafted humor is the result when the rural "twins" come to New York to fight the strip-mining of their valley by the company which the New York "twins" have inherited. The film is often dazzling, screwball comedy.

The leads deserve credit not just for their versatility in playing different roles, but for their efforts to individualize them. Tomlin's West Virginian does some inventive "hexing" of urban enemies; she had to fight to keep it in the script when she was told it was too hard for the "average moviegoer" to follow. Midler steals the show—less in her obviously hammy role as wicked witch of the urban Northeast than as a sweet naif from the hills. Her vocals in the role are wildly unforgettable, and her line readings get some huge belly laughs. Would that these women had made this film, rather than just starred in it!

Big is more successful, despite a similarly absurd premise: a twelve-year-old's wish to be "big" is magically granted at a carnival. The results are rewarding because of Tom Hanks's "big" version of the boy. When Hanks comes to the city to work in a toy company, *Big* evolves into a childlike fantasy which combines a satire on big business with a hymn to spontaneity.

Hanks, the urban hero renewed through love of the innocent mermaid in *Splash*, here reverses positions: he is the naif, whose charming innocence disarms or transfigures the tough types. His boss (Robert Loggia) quickly recognizes him as a genius at toy design (without understanding why); Hanks reduces complicated product-marketing meetings by hesitantly raising his hand (in classic sixth-grade style) and asking, "But is it fun?" His rival super-exec (John Heard) sneers at what he takes to be Hanks's slyness; a woman executive (Elizabeth Perkins) falls for him. Refreshing (and mostly chaste!) sex comedy occurs when she follows him to his urban loft—complete with bunk beds. She looks superb—once she (literally) lets her hair down: she's a young Judy Garland in slyly chic, free-flowing yet elegant costumes.

Directed by Penny Marshall, the film was written by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg, screenwriter and sister of The Mogul. But Hanks makes it work (like Steve Martin in another Plautine canter, *All of Me*) with body language and facial gestures. He acts as if he is visiting a body too big to handle, spreads his feet awkwardly, and banters perfectly with his pal, Jared Rushton, the only one in on the secret. He embodies the gentle subtext of the film: how to keep childlike zest alive into maturity.

A World Apart also concerns childhood—in South Africa. It won Barbara Hershey her second straight Cannes Best Actress Award, shared with co-stars Jodhi May (as her thirteen-year-old daughter) and Linda Mvusi (their black cook) in a South African household in the early 1960s. It is set just after the Sharpeville massacre, and Hershey's husband (Jerroen Krabbe) must leave to escape imprisonment as a "Communist" under the new (and subsequently notorious) ninety-day Detention Act.

This is the best film about South Africa in recent years. Unlike *Cry Freedom*, it places the need for political commitment in a fully human context. Texture is rich from scene one, when May watches father kiss Hershey goodbye and feels Electra-like longing. When Hershey is dragged off to jail in lieu of her husband, typical scenes of tough police interrogation are balanced by May bearing the homefront burden. She is ostracized by friends, teased at school, and (through Mvusi) befriended by blacks, only to become quickly familiar with the horrors with which they must live. The most honest portrayal in the film is May's resentment over her parents' choice of politics over family, social demands over personal. "Sometimes I do understand," she says. "Sometimes I don't."

A World Apart has the dignity to present this as a real ethical dilemma, especially in a climactic mother-daughter confrontation, without the easily recited answers about social obligation. The film includes comical, childlike elements that add real-life texture. Directed by Chris Menges (who shot *The Killing Fields* and *The Mission*), *A World Apart* is written by Shawn Slovo, some of whose life May portrays. Slovo's own parents were arrested and fled South Africa in the 1960s. Her father is currently the only white member of the Executive Committee of the African National Congress; her mother was killed by a parcel bomb in 1982.

TOM O'BRIEN

In keeping with *Commonweal*'s usual summer schedule, only one issue is published each month during July and August. The next issue published will be dated August 12.

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ART

OPENING FROM THE HEART
THE GUGGENHEIM GOES CZECH

The Moldau has come to Manhattan. Now through September 18, sixty works from the Narodni Galerie in Prague will be on view at the Guggenheim Museum. Entitled "Modern Treasures from the National Gallery in Prague," the exhibit includes paintings by such major figures of pioneering modernism as Cézanne, Gauguin, Klimt, Matisse, Munch, Braque, Picasso, and Toulouse-Lautrec. But the special significance of the exhibition is that for the first time the American public will have the opportunity to see works by Czech artists never before shown in America—artists whose names are for the most part not known by us: Beneš, Čapek, Filla, Kubišta, Kupka, Procházka, Šíma, Šála, and Zrzavý. While on view with their masters and contemporaries, they rank here as creators in their own right, specifically "Czech" artists from the region of Bohemia (Czechoslovakia also includes Moravia and Slovakia) and its capital, Prague, in the heart of Central Europe, a crossroad between East and West.

The Guggenheim is an appropriate place for such an exhibit as it is itself a monumental example of the best of modern architectural settings in which to see any exhibition of paintings, modern or otherwise.

The exhibition is divided into three categories: European, French, and—the highlight of the presentation—Czech painting. The European grouping includes works from Norway, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Russia. Karl Hofer's *Boy with a Ball*, done around 1925, exudes a certain eerie lightness amidst a foreboding darkness. It could be Picasso as a child and resembles in tone and mood Picasso's famous *Self-Portrait* of 1907, which is also in the exhibition in the French grouping. On the other hand, Gustav Klimt's *Virgin*, done near the end of his life, reflects the ethereal freedom and mystical freshness of Vienna's Jugenstil (in Prague, called Secessionist) art and architecture, which was prevalent at the turn of the century. The maiden is slumbering and sensuous in a sea of female flesh.

There are works by Munch (whose paintings were seen in Prague as early as 1905), Shiele, Constant Permeke, and two Soviet artists, R. Robert Falk and Aristarch Lentulov. Works by the latter show the influence of Cézanne and the Cubist movement that followed him. Oskar Kokoschka, who although born in Austria was of partial Czech descent and lived in Prague in the 1930s, is represented by two paintings of the famous Charles Bridge in Prague. These works are fiercely and impressionistically painted, although the colors—with an emphasis on blue—are muted and scattered, a foreshadowing of the turmoil that was to be the fate of the young Czechoslovak republic only a few years later.

The European grouping gives an overview of the changes and developments in painting shortly before the turn of the century. Photography was beginning to have a major impact. Pictures of current works of art were becoming available, for example, and with them awareness of what was happening in the art world throughout Europe. Experimentation became the norm. There was frenetic activity in exploring new forms, new ways. But such experimentation was no longer necessarily isolated.

Anti-rationalism took hold in art as it did in the increasing social and political upheavals of the age. The Symbolists, the Expressionists, the Fauves ("the wild beasts," so-called by the critic Louis Vauxelles at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1905), the Cubists, and nonobjective, nonrepresentational art, all were born at this period. The age demanded an escape from the ordinary and mundane, as well as from the terrible affairs of the world at hand.

Likewise, design and form became configurations of disjointed geometrical shapes. The French grouping is dominated by Picasso and Braque, leaders of the so-called School of Paris, who dominated the movement and gave us Cubism. In the Guggenheim exhibit, Picasso's *Nude Woman* and *Toreador Playing a Guitar* are geometric puzzles done in greys. Though a "whole," their parts clash, almost violently, and both works lack a pleasing order.

The Czech artists represented in the third section of the exhibition were all very much part of the international milieu permeating from Paris. Their works, however, stand on their own. They are eclectic, coming from Prague, at that time a most eclectic center of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Of the

Accordion Player by Josef Čapek, 1913.

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works shown here, all were done between 1907 and 1933—a period encompassing World War I, the demise of the empire, the formation of the Czechoslovak republic, and the rise of Nazism. A lot was happening.

Frantisek Kupka, a major figure in modern Czech art, is represented in the exhibition by six works. Kupka believed in painting "new structures . . . [which] have been created entirely by the artist himself." He did most of his work in Paris. Of the selections, his *Creation* is the most appealing. It is kaleidoscopic in form and color, and as I viewed it I wished there had been a whole series of such tableaux. Given prominence is his *Synthesis*, a large depiction of unrelated parts of a machine, done in monochromatic tones. On the lower left of the panel is an automobile tire with a leak, a fissure—an odd sense of "synthesis."

Emil Filla's *Reading Dostoyevsky* (1907) is intriguing. A man is depicted sitting at a table holding a volume of Dostoyevsky. The man looks dead, or at least exhausted. (Dostoyevsky is demanding.) On the wall hangs a crucifix. The colors are greyish and ashen.

Vincenc Beneš's *Susanna at Her Bath*, on the other hand, is quite lovely, using cerulean blues and raw sienna. Josef Šíma's surrealist *Untitled* is an oddly attractive painting of a nude woman, emerging like a goddess from the side of a palisade. Then there is Jan Zrzavy's *Sermon on the Mount*. It is austere with pointy and elongated figures. There is little feeling of beatitude. Finally, Vaclav Špála's charming painting *Peasant Woman* (1912) reminded me of some of the "folk art" for which the region of Slovakia is known.

The nine Czech painters in this exhibition represent two movements in modern Czech art known as the "Umělecká Besada" who were interested in modern urban life, and the "Mánes" who were rigidly experimental. Together they offer a fine representation of art in Prague at the beginning of the modern period.

The Guggenheim Foundation will sponsor a reciprocal exhibition in Prague in November. The publics of both countries will see paintings never before exhibited in their respective lands. Such artistic exchanges are fundamental to any understanding of a people and are the basis for respect between East and West. This exhibition is an opening from the heart of Europe.

GEOFFREY GNEUHS

Geoffrey Gneuhs, a former associate editor of the Catholic Worker, *is a writer and painter who has frequently visited Czechoslovakia.*

Samuel Hazo

A Crossing

Boarding this ship of Paul
the mariner, we bring and find
our bearings here.
West
of our birth and east of death,
we sail from southern porches
to the true north of God . . .
Though churches built as ships
or crosses rise no more,
we still can tell within these
walls the time of all cathedrals.
Their bells and trumpets summon
us to be what we can be
for the believing.
Their altars
prophesy that men who build
what will outlive them build
like that first sailor of the Lord
who christened for the Christ
he never saw the whole world
west of Byblos . . .
If where
we live the best is when
we love the most, we sail
like Paul as far as we can love.
That love's the same in Antioch
or Chartres or in this sheer
and steepled prayer.
The compass
of this cross shall lead us there.

DANCE

STARS & THEIR STRIPES

THE AMERICAN MUSICAL FESTIVAL

To celebrate its fortieth anniversary, the New York City Ballet recently mounted an American Music Festival (April 26 and May 15). The Festival consisted of twenty-three ballets set to American music.

Five new scores were commissioned by NYCB from contemporary composers (Charles Wuorinen, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Leslie Stuck, Michael Torke, and Paul Schwartz), and scores by forty-three other composers were played, including those of popular songwriters (Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, and Richard Rodgers), jazz musicians (Duke Ellington and Ray Charles), and classic contemporaries (John Cage, Lukas Foss, Samuel Barber, and Leonard Bernstein). Participating guest artists included violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, cellist Fred Sherry, and soprano Joan Morris. Finally, a series of eleven posters was commissioned from abstract, "pop," and figurative American painters such as Helen Frakenthaler, Roy Lichtenstein, and Susan Rothenberg. One need go no further for the event's justification than a comment of the Festival's

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organizer, Peter Martins: "It's challenges that help keep us in shape."

There certainly were challenges. The dancers of the company had to learn twenty-three new ballets and the musicians had to prepare an enormous volume of unfamiliar music. Costume and scenic shops were taxed to their capacity. Rehearsal logistics were an organizational triumph.

There was, of course, precedent in the four major festivals the company had mounted between 1972 and 1982. These differed in concept. They had been devoted to the music of a single composer. Stravinsky, then Ravel, followed by Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky again. For each festival, the late George Balanchine had created new works and had encouraged the choreographic aspirations of company members. Large numbers of new ballets were created, a handful of which became part of the standard repertory.

Sixteen choreographers presented premiers of their work in this spring's festival. Two of the pieces, those by Eugene Tanner and the late Joseph Duell, had previously been performed but were new to the company's repertory. Several of the other pieces, departing substantially from the company's "black and blue" tradition of a bare stage, blue-lit cyclorama, and black curtains, were lushly invested with scenic apparatus and props. One of the most successful of these was Martins's "The Waltz Project," originally commissioned in the bicentennial year. The dozen selections he chose from out of the original twenty-five ranged from the romantic to the eccentric. Martins, who had been a champion ballroom dancer in his native Denmark, clearly understands and enjoys working with the intricacies of social dancing. For an acknowledged *pièce d'occasion*, "Sophisticated Lady," Martins appeared himself to partner stylishly in an extended social dance duet with Suzanne Farrell.

Among the company members invited to contribute ballets to the festival were Ib Andersen, Bart Cook, Robert La Fosse, Miriam Mahdaviani, and Violette Verdy. None had previously mounted ballets for the company and the results were mixed. Mahdaviani's "The Newcomers" and Verdy's "Set of Seven" were notable for their fresh presentation of individual dancers' talents. Cook's "Into the Hopper" (Edward Hopper) wove a surreal story out of characters from well-known paintings emerging from their frames when the museum was closed. The imagery and integrated film sequences were novel, but the plot was slight and little movement invention was shown. Andersen's "Baroque Variations" involved a couple in an intricate set of variations nestled amidst trio interludes. It showed considerable skill and musical sensitivity. La Fosse's "Woodland Sketches" was delicately nuanced, an exploration of light-hearted flirtation and romance that created a small-scale but charming piece for four couples.

Laura Dean, Eliot Feld, William Forsythe, Lar Lubovitch, and Paul Taylor—all directors and chief choreographers for their own companies—were invited to participate in the Festival. Dean and Lubovitch worked with members of the company, combining their own styles of modern dance movement with the company's classic styling. Dean's "Space" was notable for its use of a large corps, while Lubovitch's "Rhapsody in Blue" effectively caught the drive of the familiar Gershwin score.

Feld's surreal "The Unanswered Question" inventively combined props and movement to evoke the atmosphere of Ives's discordant music. Taylor's dark "Danbury Mix," named after the composer's hometown, caught the astringency and naive jolliness of the Ives music he selected. He had used two of the pieces from "Three Places in New England" with equal success twenty-three years earlier in his "From Sea to Shining Sea." Forsythe's "Behind the China Dogs," a gloss on the classic vocabulary, was resolutely obscure.

On the closing evening, a suite of songs performed by Ray Charles and a group supported by the New York City Ballet orchestra provided an energetic and exuberant finale for both dancers and musicians. Overall, the festival produced a handful of ballets that will enter the regular repertory and perhaps one score, Wuorinen's, that will have an independent concert life. To what degree it will draw attention to American music in general remains to be seen. It certainly demonstrated the popularity of Ives and Gershwin. Their music was selected by four different choreographers for visual realization. But the real success of the festival lay in the demonstration of new aspects of the company's own technical brilliance and sturdy flexibility.

DON McDONAGH

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by Philip Fried

"*Mutual Trespasses* is twentieth century theology spilled out with relentless gusto, amusement, and compassion. You gotta feel sorry for a God that got Himself into this mess — and Phil Fried dramatizes His plight in poem after poem, never veering far from comedy, yet continually probing for the significance of the violent collision of idea and substance. Man and God are in an eternal bind, each yearning for the other. The Lord prays:

for I am starved for what they hardly
see — too engrossed in their heavenly dream —
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The distance between bodies

LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA
Gabriel Garcia Márquez
Translated by Edith Grossman
Alfred A. Knopf, $18.95, 348 pp.

Elizabeth A. Beverly

I am tempted to proclaim that no one else writes like Gabriel Garcia Márquez, but what I mean more precisely is that no one else has invited me to read the way he has. For if *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is in some way about the fictional village of Macondo, and *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1976) about the illusory potency of a Caribbean dictator (to cite only two of his previous fictions), then these novels are equally about the delight of finding within myself the ability to read with generosity, compassion, and no small degree of surprise. I know I'm not alone in my pleasure.

Edith Grossman's three-hundred-forty-eight page English translation of *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Garcia Márquez's most recent novel, has already logged several months on the *New York Times*' bestseller list. This suggests that people want not only to read about a kind of love which both defies and redeems time, anger, and contagion, but to spend time reading about it. People understand that to Garcia Márquez our literacy matters. And in this novel, as we follow the love of Florentino Ariza (telegraph clerk/womanizer/riverboat magnate) for Fermina Daza (school girl/dutiful wife and mother/distinguished widow) through fifty-three years, seven months, and eleven days and nights in an unnamed Caribbean city, Garcia Márquez dazzles with wit and command. His stylistic flourishes: precise numbers, careful but random catalogues, extravagant cadenced prose, slightly syrupy diction, phantasms glimmering in the margins (a perceptibly growing doll, a ghost waving from the shore), are all present.

In *Love in the Time of Cholera*, these devices do not dominate, but serve the bold, circling narrative. Whether we read to find out how remarkably well the book is written, or to find out just what happens to the elderly Florentino and Fermina, the point is that we read. And if Garcia Márquez's narrative dazzle and our curiosity get us to read in the first place, then we'll learn something. For although this author can never be accused of being didactic, he does want to teach us.

The lesson begins with the title. It is both a tease and a stunner. Great Russian novels come to mind. Here we encounter two massive Western abstractions undercut by disease, and a disease which sounds a lot like a human emotion. There is humor in this title; there is significance.

As we begin reading we know we are in the right book; we hear about love, about time and its passage, even about "the great cholera epidemic." But how the title directly concerns the story we have little idea. In this opening section we follow a man through a day. He is elderly, fastidious. He has had a friend, a man friend, and on this day, finds out that his friend is not the person he seemed to be. Not at all. This revelation comes from the friend's own hand, and for the rest of the day, this revelation spreads through our man's life. It unsettles him; he cannot keep his footing, literally cannot keep his footing. And so he falls.

I have risked revealing a glimpse of the plot because it seems important to assert that, in this section, Garcia Márquez is teaching us one way to read his novel. We are like his man, believing that we know certain facts about these kinds of big books, believing even that we are being invited to read the lives of one set of characters. Then, astonishingly, we find out that this novel isn't what it seems to be at all; we must readjust. We feel unsettled; we lose our footing, and fall through time into the dense narrative of early love. The second section suggests that we start over.

The loss of footing is a sure touch, because we can lose footing only if we have feet. And that, surely, is Garcia Márquez's absolute knowledge. He understands and writes about embodiment, not The Incarnation, but *our* incarnation, the simple fact that we play out our lives stranded inside of bodies. Bodies trap us in time, in disease and, if not in love itself, then at least in our need for love. This entrapment may be enticing, as in one man's "pleasure [in] smelling a secret garden in [his] urine . . . purified by lukewarm asparagus." Or the experience may be agonizing, as in the case of an earache so intense that the woman who suffers it "realized that her pain was stronger than her desire to be with him," the man she is growing to love. Whether enticing or agonizing, the entrapment exists, and we may believe that there is no way out.

But lest we despair, Garcia Márquez knows one way to bridge the distance between bodies, one way to meet. He knows the power of the right word at the right time. This novel is about the desperate attempt to communicate. Hundreds of letters exchange hands, missives are slipped under doors, telegraph wires hum, even a telephone is installed. What passes for dialogue reads more like the significant aphorism set off by colons, for, over the course of time, only the powerful words are remembered.

Over the course of time, Florentino, the love-letter-writer, learns how to write

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better; Fermina, the recipient, learns to read more generously. Florentino learns that longing can never be satisfied, but it can be shared; Fermina learns what longing really is. They are able to learn at all because of their patience. And, of course, it is the virtue of patience and the suffering of patients that allows us to recognize and accept love, time, and even cholera.

If the narrative is not direct, if it requires *our* patience at times, this is primarily because Garcia Márquez reminds us continually that authorial whim is the only reason that the two main characters have been singled out to star in this novel. Their lives are no more privileged than those of other people who haunt the prose of this book: Rosalba who carries her baby in a birdcage; a "good" Chinese who wins the "Golden Orchid award" in the annual Poetic Festival; Leona Cassiani, the "lionlady" of Florentino's soul. Even a parrot. Garcia Márquez's generous embrace of these lives encourages us to recognize the rich riot of our own lives. It seems merely accidental that we too cannot be included in this novel.

But in a way we are. For just as Florentino knows that in order for love to exist it must be proclaimed and heard, so does Garcia Márquez know that the only way for *Love in the Time of Cholera* to exist is for us to read it. I am reminded of Charlotte Brontë who, through Jane Eyre's voice, calls to us through the years: "Reader, I married him." She needed, still needs, for us to bear witness. Garcia Márquez requires the same act. He asks us to attend to the matters raised by the title: love, age, disease/death.

The elderly Fermina reads one of Florentino's letters: "It was a meditation on life, love, old age, death: ideas that had often fluttered around her head like nocturnal birds but dissolved into a trickle of feathers when she tried to catch hold of them." Perhaps we are like Fermina in our need for such a meditation, our hope that this novel may be it. Still, we are most like Fermina in our grasp of the object itself, not the ideas within. For Fermina, letters are things to be stashed away, hidden, folded, even burned. They are things.

This book is a big thing, and the sheer heft of it can comfort a body. The lesson lies not only in *what* the book says (that love through time may actually exist) or *how* it says (with technical virtuosity, humor, and pathos), but *that* it says at all. When night comes, some of us flip on the light, nestle under the covers with a book, and begin to read. If the book is good, and we hope it's good, we may learn how to dream our way into the next full-bodied day. I suspect that Garcia Márquez knows about our hope; I suspect that that is the reason he writes like no one else. □

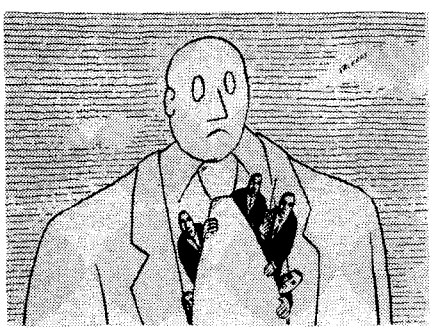
THE MAN WHO WOULD BE CAPO

DANGEROUS DOSSIERS
Herbert Mitgang
Donald I. Fine, $18.95, 331 pp.

THE BOSS
J. Edgar Hoover and the Great American Inquisition
Athan G. Theoharis and John Stuart Cox
Temple University, $27.95, 489 pp.

Saul Maloff

Apart from the bare facts that they are all American, all dead, all writers of prose or verse or both, what in the world does this motley gathering, some of whom would not have been caught dead in one another's company, have in common? Sinclair Lewis, Pearl Buck, Thomas Mann (remember that the German master became a U.S. citizen in 1944), Dorothy Parker, Nelson Algren, Truman Capote, Robert Lowell, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, H. L. Mencken, Edmund Wilson . . . Your first twenty-odd guesses are dead wrong.



The answer is that in varying measure and sometimes for inscrutable reasons all were under surveillance by the FBI and are immortalized in absurd, comic-opera files of forbidden thoughts and sentiments deemed impermissible by the late J. Edgar Hoover, capo in his time of the American governmental netherworld.

Those names are merely a random congeries of the dossiers Herbert Mitgang was able to compel from the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act. The Bureau was (and is) able to employ escape hatches which permit it to withhold some documents (aided by evasive tactics devised by the Reagan-Meese cabal) and expunge all manner of information. Of the hundreds of dossiers Mitgang examined in order to compile this record of FBI infamy, which places us all greatly in his debt, include these among the Nobel Laureates (in addition to Lewis, Buck, Mann): Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck; these among many others: Dashiell Hammett, Irwin Shaw, A.J. Liebling, William Saroyan, Lillian Hellman; these among "foreign" authors: Auden, Spender, Graham Greene, Aldous Huxley, Ignazio Silone; these among living writers who provided Mitgang with their files: J.K. Galbraith, Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg; these among painters and sculptors: Alexander Calder, Ben Shahn, Georgia O'Keeffe, Henry Moore.

If this illustrious catalogue isn't sufficiently depressing to contemplate, just imagine: our very own political purity-police devoted infinite time and public treasure to excavating information,

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much of it readily obtainable in periodicals and newspapers. As depressing in its way is the bleak and everywhere evident fact that the agents who drew up these reports, from the callowest youth and greenest clerk to the emperor himself, wouldn't have known Mann from Liebling, Greene from Ginsberg, and clearly hadn't read the writers they condemned. Their victims deserved better adversaries.

If a designated victim is seen (by some informer or some other miscreant seeking to curry favor with the overlord) at a "suspect" public meeting (say a meeting calling for peace or racial equality) along with thousands of others, that fact is duly recorded in the dossier. Accordingly, Pearl Buck's dossier contained some 800 pages, Algren's nearly 600, some more, some less. Capote's file could do no better than note that his name had appeared on the lists of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in 1960, when the revolution had only recently come to power and only just thrown out the cutthroats who governed for and under Batista, a time when not to favor "fair play" for the new regime was widely felt to be mean-spirited or worse.

Indeed in Hoover's astigmatic eyes, opposition to fascism was itself suspect, virtual proof of Communist inclinations if not outright membership in the party. To oppose Franco and his generals, though they were declared fascists massively supported by Hitler and Mussolini, was also suspect. Mann's sin was his passionate opposition to Hitler from the beginning, and he not even a Jew. Consider, if you can bear it, that Mann was under steady surveillance by the FBI's Los Angeles bureau, which kept the Washington office informed of his travels abroad, and that headquarters saw fit to inform embassies and legal counselors of Mann's presence in their precinct; and in turn was informed by the "liaison representative" in Heidelberg, to cite one instance of Mann's sinister career, that their subject was there to deliver a lecture on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Friedrich Schiller's death!

And so it goes, dismayingly, infuriatingly, on and on. Alfred Knopf, surely the nation's most distinguished publisher at that time, was a target by reason of the books he published. As many others were, so too was Sinclair Lewis suspect for thinking racial equality a desirable goal; and evidence of FBI racism abounds everywhere in these files, as it does throughout its history.

Only now, the better part of a century after the young Hoover, driven by who knows what morbidities, began to compile his "Obscene File" (with its immense possibilities for sexual blackmail of political enemies), together with other secret files kept separate from the "official" ones (twenty-five *million* of them)—only now is something resembling a full record coming into view. *The Boss*, by Athan Theoharis (the author of earlier important studies, notably *Spying on Americans*) and John Stuart Cox comes closest to being an authoritative, definitive history of Hoover and his creature, the FBI, and the closest approach to a biography of the man—an impressive performance in original research and imposing coherence on chaos.

History and biography are virtually one and the same—the FBI *was* Hoover's biography. He had virtually no life outside and separate from it—no wife, no children, no friends other than his "closest" and only friend (and eventual heir to his estate) and second-in-command, Clyde Tolson, no family to speak of other than the mother with whom he lived until her death when he was forty-three (his ineffectual father, a petty civil servant, lived a substantial part of his life in mental hospitals), no social life, no other compelling interests, and no discernible pleasures. The man who emerges from this study is mad for power, for empire; he is the consummate bureaucrat, certain that the nation's defining documents—the Constitution and the Bill of Rights—are hopelessly inadequate to the real task at hand, which, as all true patriots know, is to defend the flag by searching out and destroying those who would desecrate, defile, and subvert it.

Hoover cast a very wide net: the list of organizations under surveillance at one time or another is almost too long to tabulate. When you have the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance under surveillance, that's pretty wide as nets go; the list of persons is without end. Everyone is guilty.

The "boss," as his flunkies called him, damaged and distorted the nation's intellectual, artistic, and moral life in a multitude of ways. Nor have the wounds ever quite healed. Yet Lyndon Johnson, among legions of others, past and present, sanctified him. If it "hadn't been for Hoover," he wrote Richard Nixon in 1969, he "couldn't have carried out [his] responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief. . . . He is a pillar of strength in a city of weak men. You will rely on him . . . to maintain security. He's the only one you

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can put your complete trust in."

He is gone now, Hoover is. Or is he? Mitgang relates the splendid old legend. When Clyde Tolson proposed that, as they had spent so much of their lives together, they should buy a burial plot and pass eternity together, J. Edgar, a prudent man with his own money, declined, saying that the price was excessive, considering that he expected to spend only three days under ground. □

"HEIM" IS WHERE THE HEART IS

STEALING HOME
Israel Bound and Rebound
Haim Chertok
Fordham University, $19.95, 295 pp.

Gerald Weales

Haim Chertok was still Harvey when he turned up in my graduate American drama course almost thirty years ago. He wrote a reasonably respectable essay on a playwright who did not much interest him (his mind was on the fiction he was trying to write) and, after pocketing his M.A. in American Civilization, about which he is mildly ironic in *Stealing Home*, he went off to Brown and further graduate work. It was not an unusual defection. Bright and restless students often change colleges in search of the nonexistent nest that is just right for their talents and temperaments. I did not know it at the time—nor did Chertok—but his transfer was an early step in a journey that he hoped would take him out of *galut* (exile). His lively glossary in *Stealing Home* defines *galut* as "a concept and state of Jewish soul," which explains why his *aliya* (immigration to Israel) is an ascent, as the ambiguity of his title suggests, which carries exile with it.

Chertok surfaced now and then in my life—usually in my mailbox—with reports from the various way stations of his quest. On army duty in Japan, he lived off base, hoping to become part of the working-class neighborhood he chose; he wrote sadly that his Japanese, functional in the vegetable market, would never be good enough for philosophical discussion. From New York, he was high and then not so high on the possibilities of Bensalem, a communal experimental college he was running at Fordham, where he had gone as an undergraduate. From California, he was settling into conventional college teaching where, in the best American liberal tradition, he

REVIEWERS

ELIZABETH A. BEVERLY, *who co-authored "Letting Sanji Die" in the May 20, 1988 issue, is writing a book about her encounters with the Mandinka culture of Senegal.*

SAUL MALOFF, *a novelist and critic, recently completed a political memoir of the McCarthy years.*

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could do good and well at the same time. Then, suddenly, he moved his family and his hopes to Israel. That was 1976, and he is still there.

The *suddenly* above is my adverb, not Chertok's. His departure from America was the result of a long, nagging process that is central to *Stealing Home*. In the 1980s, Chertok became a writer in earnest, contributing to both Israeli and American Jewish publications. When the essay that has become the opening chapter of *Stealing Home* first appeared in *Commentary* (an odd place these days for a left-leaning activist), I discovered that his letters to me had left out his growing spiritual distress. Perhaps on the assumption that I was a *goyisher* secularist, a practical Midwesterner for whom a *galoot* was only an awkward oaf, he gave me the details of everyday life—family, work, social setting—without dwelling on the needs that infected or informed them. The essay was a revelation. For the reader who never knew Chertok in any of his guises, it should still be fascinating.

Although Chertok was politically and professionally at home in California, his return to religious orthodoxy set him apart not only from his non-Jewish but from his Jewish friends and colleagues. He came to fear what was most enticing about Coalinga, California, that it was a comfortable place into which he could sink, that it would devour his Jewishness and—still the 1960's rebel—accustom him to what he primly calls "an unseemly standard of consumption." Believing that to be a Jew meant to take "next year in Jerusalem" literally, he made his *aliya*, but his return to the promised land was not all milk and honey.

He distrusts the materialism that marks so much of Israeli life, is wary of the attractions of the cosmopolitan cities, deplores the aggressiveness that has turned Israel's need for security into an annexation of other people's land. As a peacenik, he is one of a small and isolated group among religious Jews; as an Orthodox Jew, he is an oddity on the left, where his political allegiances lie. He is plainly more at home in Yeroham, the town where he settled, than he has been anywhere else, but he is only one of a handful of Anglos among a largely Moroccan and Indian Jewish population.

"Anomaly in America, anomaly in Israel," he says at one point, and elsewhere comments on his "idiosyncratic choice always . . . to live apart." It is his acceptance of this condition—that we all carry our exile with us—which makes it possible for him to reconsider Coalinga in the last chapter, to contemplate a temporary, unthreatening return there. One more variation on *Stealing Home*, and fadeout on a baseball metaphor.

Stealing Home is not a chronological account of the Haim-ing of Harvey. It is a series of essays, each occasioned by a particular event (a visit to his old neighborhood in the Bronx, a reading by Maxine Kumin in Yeroham, a school trip with his son to Jerusalem, military duty in Beirut), illuminating one or more of the points I have touched on in the paragraph above. He has a good ear and eye for the details of the life around him, but they are presented not for themselves but as the material from which the theme and shape of each piece come. The essayist's voice has some of the impatience of Harvey Chertok, the activist as scold, but this Haim has enough self-mockery to suggest that he knows he is an imperfect man in an imperfect world. There are recognitions as well as revelations in *Stealing Home*. □

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 386)

War II. Those issues and battles do not necessarily "fit" contemporary Chile.

Having said all this, I affirm Bouvier's conclusion that *Chile* sets one pondering the fate and future of the once democratic Chile that still endures Pinochet. Unlike Timerman, I am not concerned about the quality of the stage plays produced by Chile's subculture; like him, I wish the political opposition could lead Chile into a future that will not be its past.

JO MARIE GRIESGRABER

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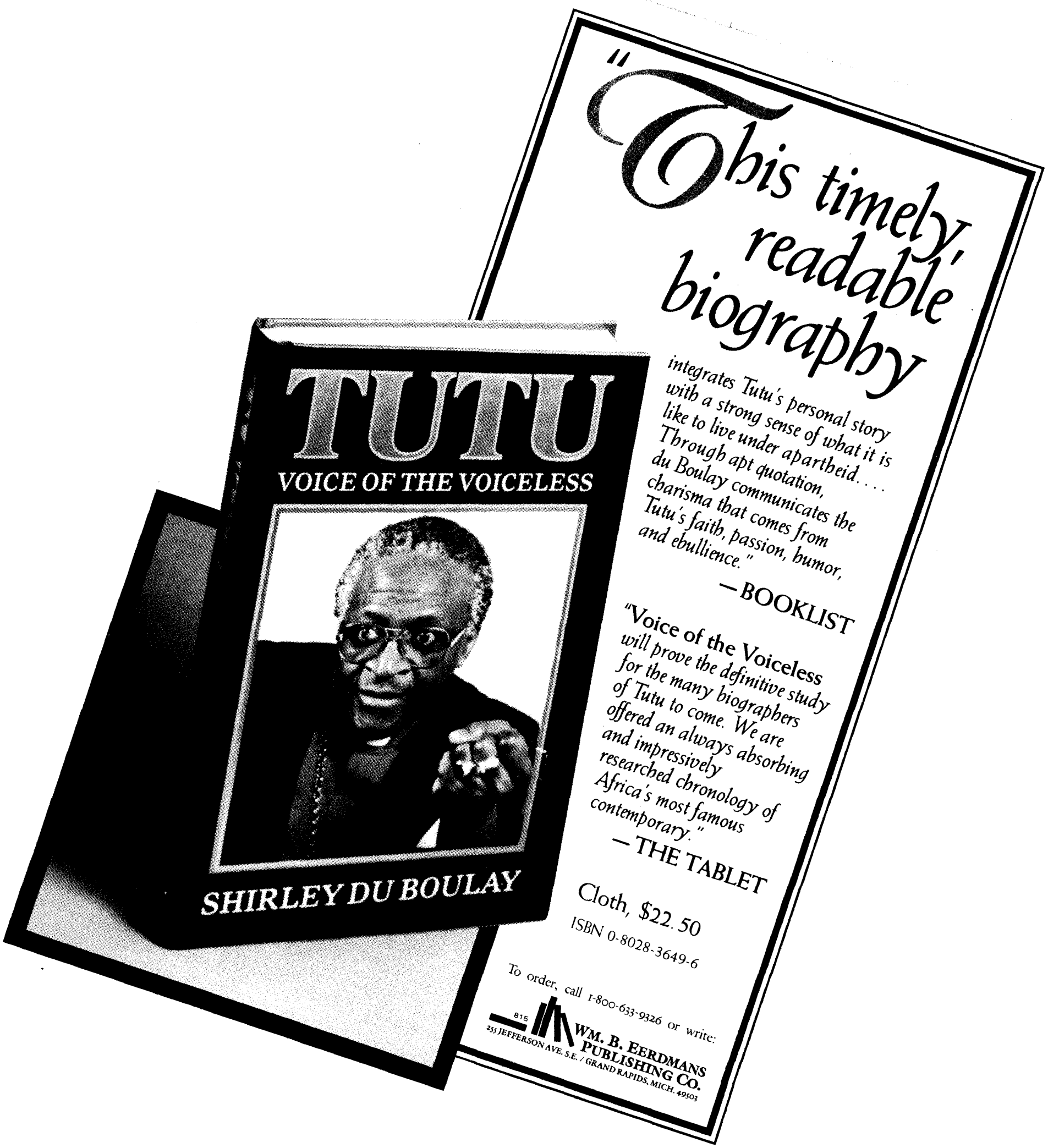
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